



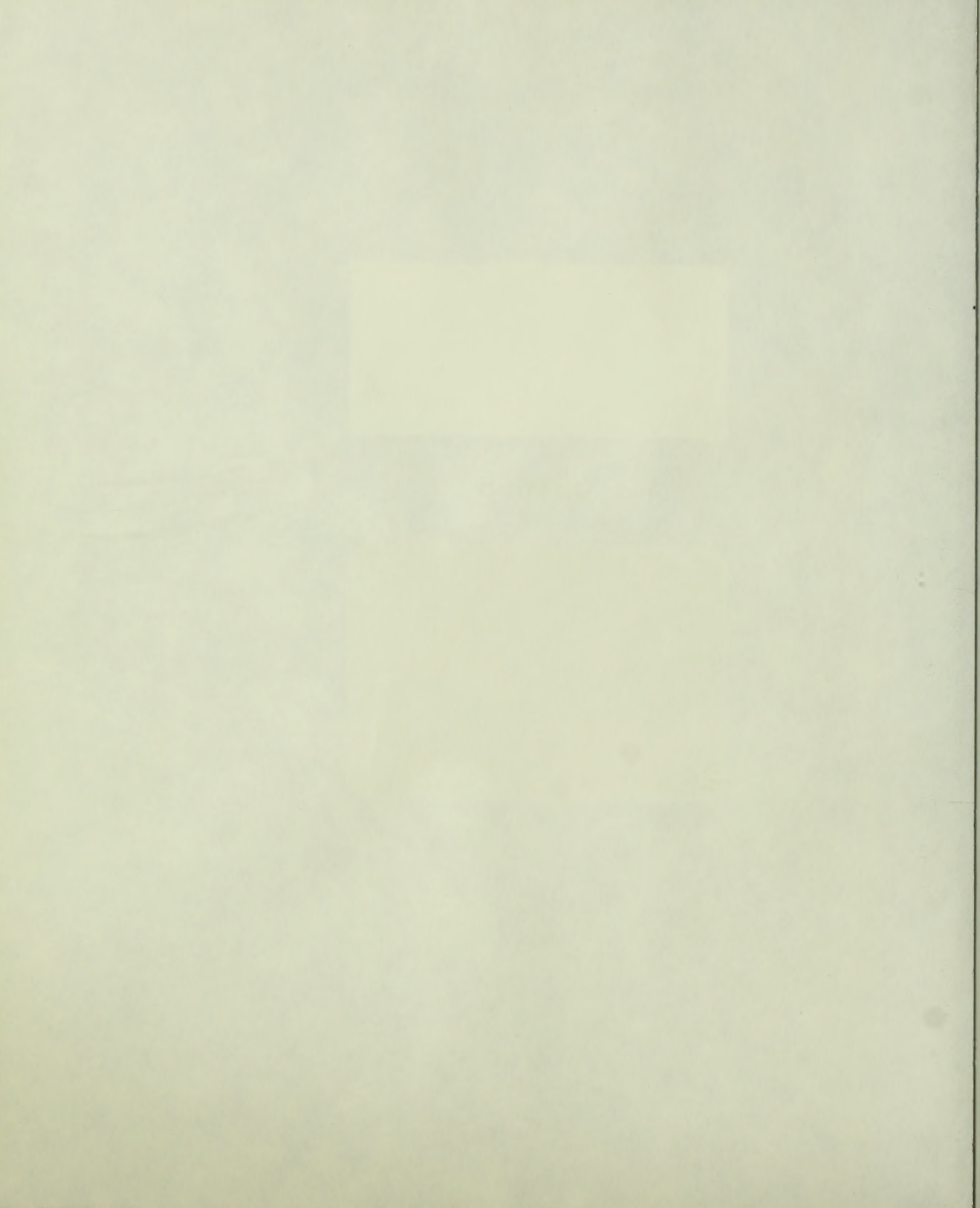
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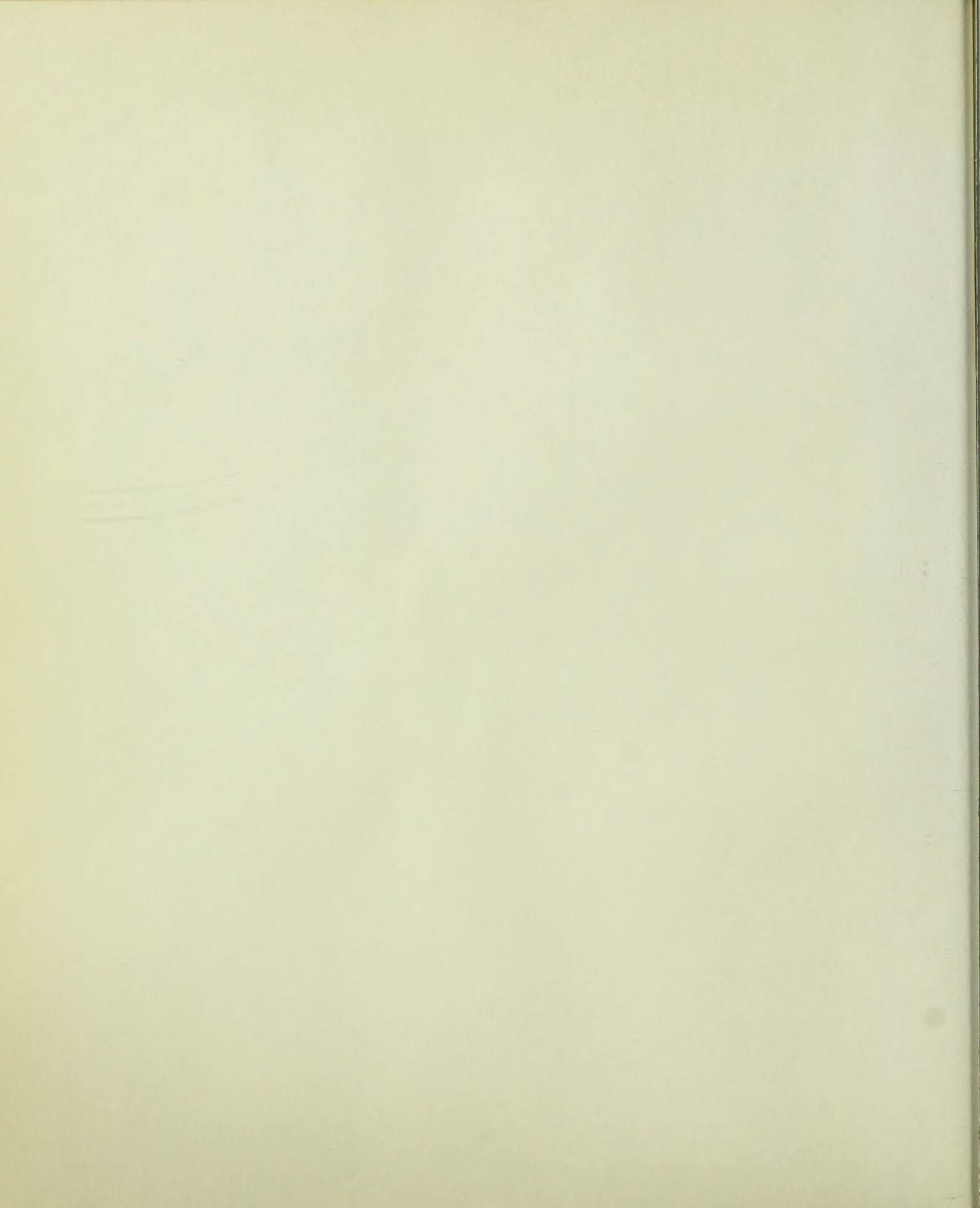


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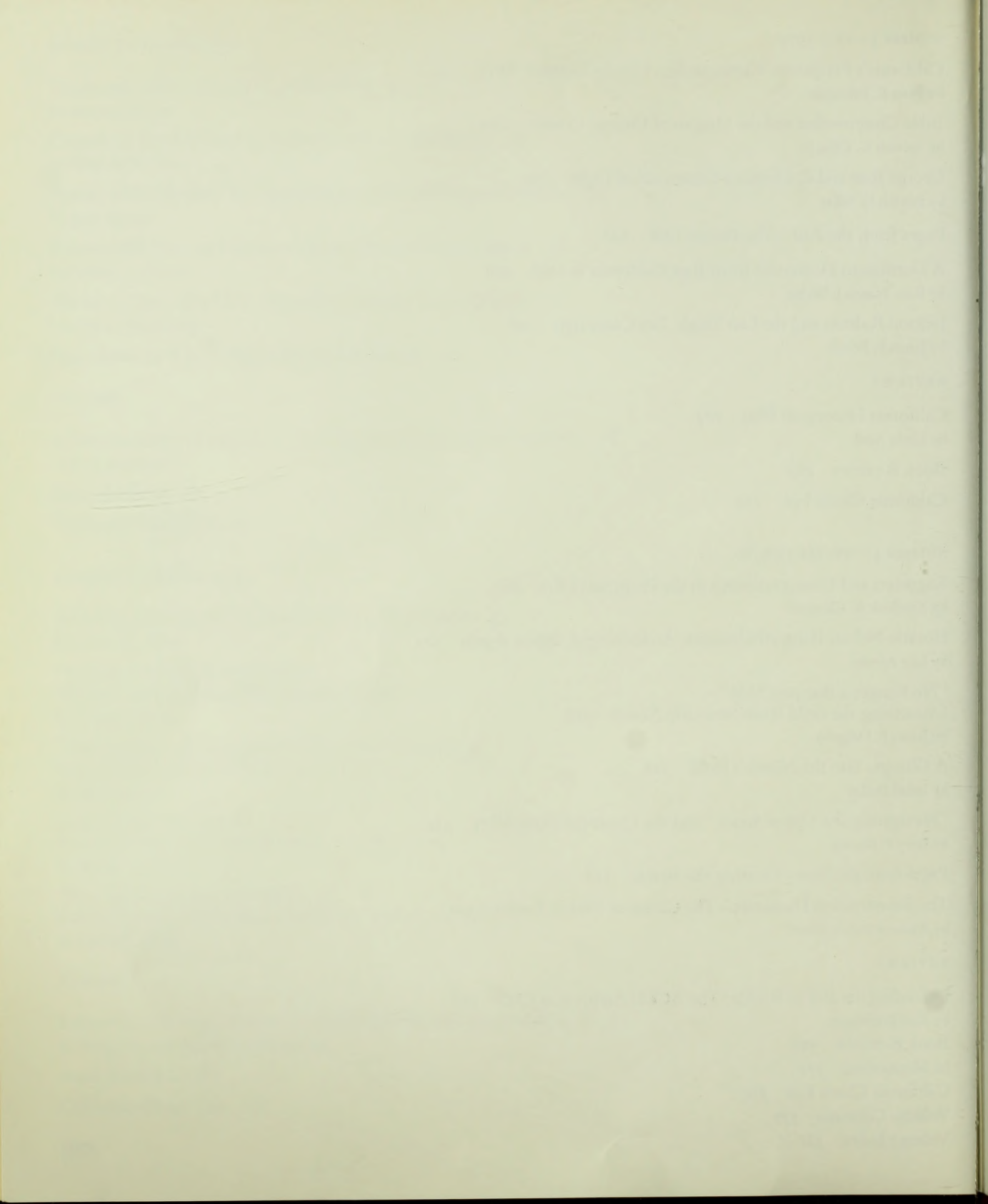
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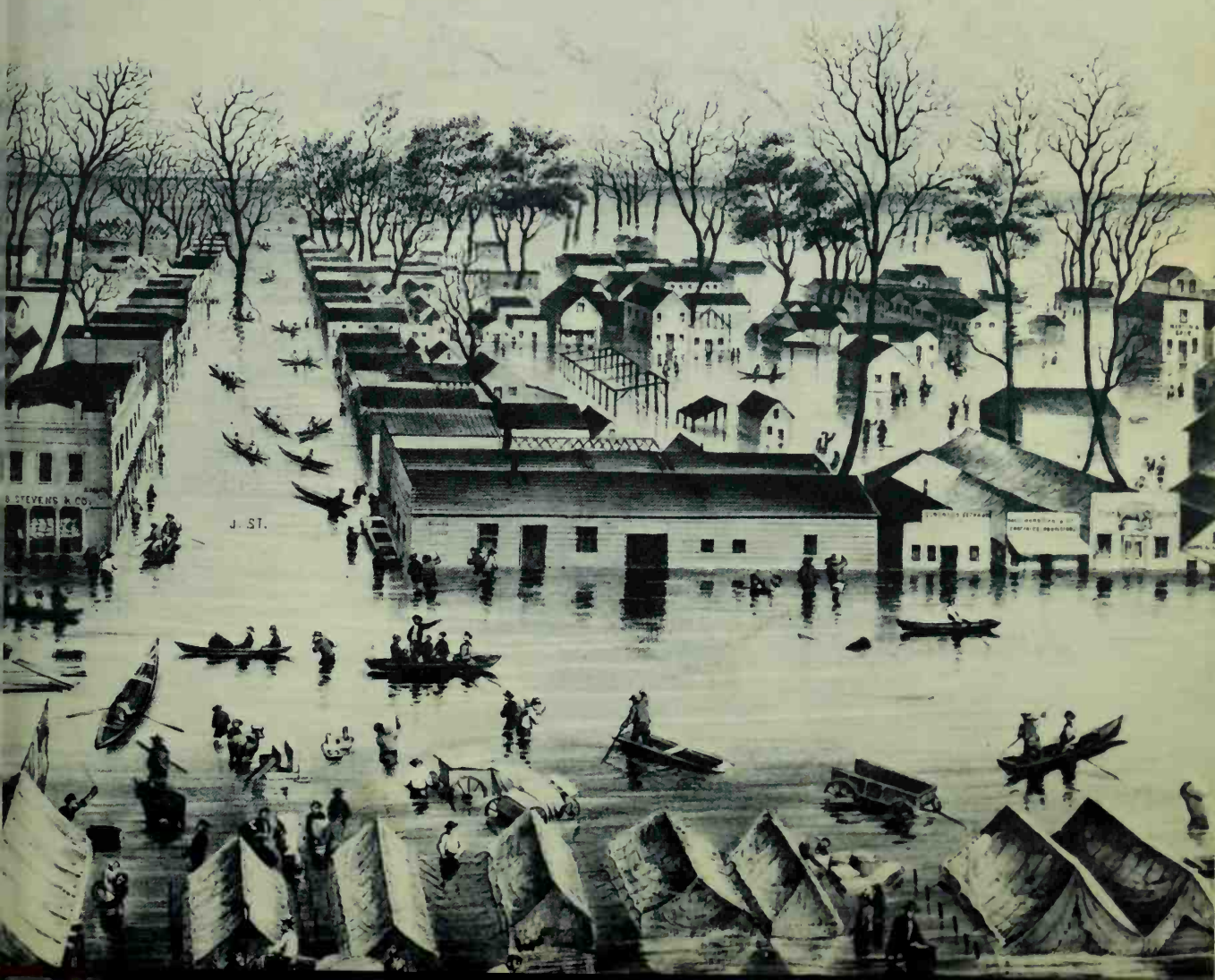
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#### COVER

The Great Inundation of January, 1850, brought the waters of the American and Sacramento rivers surging through infant Sacramento. Immediately, gold seekers camped in tents and businessmen boasting new stores and homes began the work of rebuilding the City of the Plain. For the story of Sacramento's remarkable survival as a viable commercial center in the face of the series of natural and man-made disasters which threatened it in its early decades, turn to the article beginning on page 2. *View of Sacramento City . . .*, drawn by George W. Casilear and Henry Bainbridge. Lithographed and published by Napoleon Sarony, New York, 1850. *Fine Art Collection, CHS*.

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# **Sacramento Defies the Rivers 1850-1878**





Sacramento was a city born to flood. John Sutter, however unwise about managing his financial affairs, had situated both his fort and his prospective town of Sutterville on high ground. But the men who in 1849 committed their fortunes to his Embarcadero at the confluence of the American and Sacramento rivers exercised no such prudence. The Embarcadero occupied a key commercial crossroads, and the men had opportunity rather than caution on their minds. Though the surrounding land bore clear evidence of past floodings, it was here that they destined their city to rise. True, an unremarkable winter in 1848-49 encouraged a popular delusion that the site was safe from inundation, but in November, 1849, a very different winter season began in earnest. As the year ended, the rivers were spilling into their sloughs, and Sacramentans were about to begin learning how fearsome their rivers could be.

Between 1850 and 1878 the rivers would in fact exert a formative influence on the state's capital city. In 1850, 1852, and 1853, these usually benevolent commercial lifelines came near to wrecking the town. The subsequent eight-year respite ended with yet another flood in March, 1861. During the following winter of 1862-63, Sacramento was under water with such disheartening frequency that to speak of separate floods rather than one long disaster is to make a pointless distinction. A final major flood struck within the city limits in 1878, apparently the first in sixteen years "worthy of being chronicled."<sup>1</sup> Because this last flood primarily affected out-

lying portions of the city, it is mentioned only as evidence that by 1878 Sacramento had overcome the worst of this periodic menace. The city's victory was won only after its founding citizens learned that avaricious arrogance alone could not purchase a great and permanent settlement. Other qualities were needed—qualities that more than incidentally helped identify and define the city's spirit. Their emergence made it possible for Sacramentans to build California's first great levees, raise sections of the city through massive landfill projects, and straighten river channels as though such endeavors were merely ordinary civic undertakings.

Despite the naive hopes of its earliest pioneers, Sacramento's trial by water was not to be avoided. On Wednesday, January 9, 1850, new storms began battering the valley. Sutter Lake, the slough north of the Embarcadero, began flooding the town at low-lying places between First and Third streets. Within hours some four-fifths of the city was under water, excepting portions of the natural levee along Front Street and the knoll at the public square at Tenth. Four days later the flood level stabilized at perhaps four to six feet above ground level.<sup>2</sup> The big question was no longer whether the town could flood, but how the young settlement would meet the crisis.

Following the initial inundation, boating became both a necessity and a common diversion. Some *bona fide* boats sold for as high as \$1,000 or rented for \$30 an hour in a spectacular display of a free market economy.<sup>3</sup> But every sort of buoyant craft plied the streets, and even for people having no place of importance to go, the bother of hammering together a vessel might be rewarded by the salvaging of moorless liquor casks from the water. There were also people needing rescue, but loss of life directly attributable to the flood was minor. Though several Sacramentans were thought to have drowned, only one victim is known by name, a Richard Wilkinson who fell into the swollen current while boarding a brig in the Sacramento River. Tradition tells of an unnamed Dutch-

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This study was developed for the California Department of Parks and Recreation in connection with research at the site of the Old Sacramento State Historic Park. The work was supported by Title II Grant Number 78002142 of the Public Works Employment Act of 1976.

*In the flood of January, 1850, whale boats sold for \$1000 and rented for \$30 an hour. Three weeks later the Placer Times reported that the streets were again passable, "although the walking is yet a little soft."*

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*Springing up at this last haven [Poverty Ridge] was a miniature of the city itself with tents, an instant hotel, and the Forty-niner staples of drinking and gambling.*

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man drowning through his unwillingness to cut loose a sack of several thousand dollars in gold dust, an apocryphal tale in which one senses a personification of the town's own dilemma. Perhaps for this reason the incident appears in nearly every recounting of this first great flood. Drs. J. B. D. Stillman and John Frederick Morse, whose hospital at the corner of K Street and Third had an upper story, took in every sick, washed-out refugee who reached their windows. For the rest, rescue meant rowing out to Sutter's Fort, to the boats tied up at the Embarcadero, or perhaps to the high ground on Twenty-First Street between P and X streets known as Poverty Ridge. Springing up at this last haven was a miniature of the city itself, with tents, an instant hotel, and the Forty-niner staples of drinking and gambling.<sup>4</sup>

The city abandoned by the refugees was thoroughly wrecked. Livestock by the hundreds drowned throughout the valley, but the city's material loss was staggering. Houses as well as tents simply floated away. A brick building being erected on the corner of J and Second streets fell in on its neighbor. The town's goods fared no better. Dr. Morse put the losses at "hundreds of thousands," and his inventory of individual losses listed the name of every significant businessman in town. The *Daily Alta California* estimated a loss of one million dollars; other estimates ran to three times as much.<sup>5</sup>

The flood waters began receding on January 14, and by the twenty-sixth the *Alta California* reported that the town was "generally drained and passable." The

*Placer Times*, locally published and perhaps a better judge of conditions, noted that "the walking is yet a little soft."<sup>6</sup> But the big story in the flood's wake was not such lingering discomforts, but the alacrity with which Sacramento's citizens wiped their town dry and began it all again. Too much had been staked on this flood-prone site for even so severe a setback to result in a mass exodus. Besides, its magnificent commercial advantages of being on the junction of the rivers and with excellent access to the gold fields remained, offering potential wealth from which renewed fortunes could be carved. Thus the flood dampened everything but the city's enthusiasm. Dr. Morse recalled finding not "a single dejected face or despondent spirit" in the business community. Reports that the flooding had washed gold down from the hills sent a number of carefree opportunists panning for it in the receding tide, while others hurriedly rebuilt the town.<sup>7</sup> Within a few days of the clearing weather, the stores along Front and J streets opened for business, and some men wistfully concluded that the recent flood had been a freak of nature. The January inundation, however, had shattered opposition to building levees to protect the city, and a consensus was already emerging on the issue of future flood prevention.

Private citizens rather than municipal authorities provided the leadership for levee-building, because the city's government was as yet incapable of sustained civic enterprise. In late January a public meeting resulted in the formation of a citizens' committee to arrange for surveys and cost estimates. A few days later, after the projections were available and presented to the city's common council, a joint citizen-city levee commission was created, and a new survey was undertaken.<sup>8</sup>

By the end of February public interest began focusing on a new municipal charter and the springtime city election, the levee and the election being not entirely distinct issues. The city's political organizations were still inchoate, with each of four major candidates for the new office of mayor supported by *ad hoc* coalitions.

*Sacramento's Embarcadero in 1849, a bustling entrepot for the gold fields. George Baker made this seminal sketch of the steamboat landing and waterfront buildings.*



Easily the most popular of the four was Hardin Bigelow, a prominent levee advocate and member of the joint levee commission. On April 1, 1850, following a short but spirited contest of personalities in which Bigelow apparently made the building of a levee a key issue, Bigelow garnered three times the votes of his nearest rival and became Sacramento's first mayor. Public and private initiative for constructing a watertight levee were now linked together in one man.<sup>9</sup>

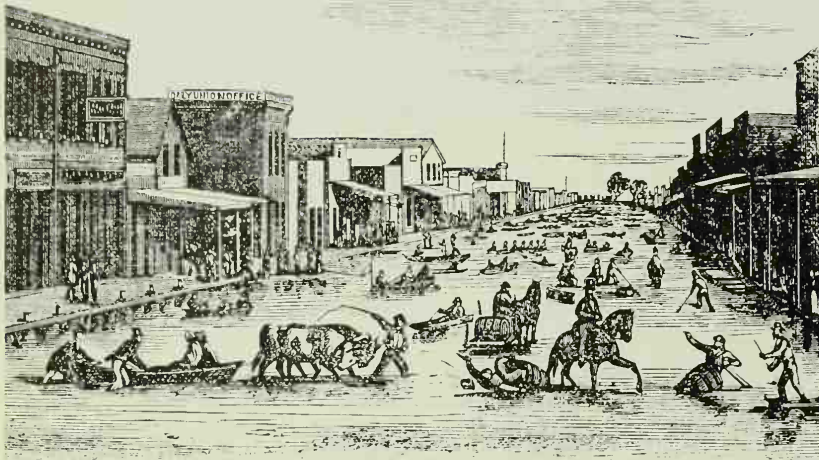
**M**ayor Bigelow expressed his commitment to Sacramento's survival soon after his election by spearheading efforts to build an emergency levee during the second week of April. The fast-melting snowpack had swollen the rivers alarmingly. In Sacramento a number of citizens labored to throw up crude levees where sloughs threatened to spill over, and Bigelow sought council backing to construct an emergency levee to prevent an impending flood. The nearly penniless city agreed to a proposal under which Bigelow immediately borrowed the funds needed to construct the work, with the understanding—in the mayor's mind at least—that the city would honor these obligations as a matter of high priority. Bigelow found it necessary to negotiate for loans in excess of the city's \$10,000 limit at 5 percent interest, and to tap his personal assets for an additional \$6,000. The ensuing financial headache plagued the mayor to his

deathbed at year's end, but the money he mobilized put dozens of laborers to work under his immediate and tireless supervision.<sup>10</sup> The anticipated second flood in 1850 was avoided, the efficacy of levees demonstrated beyond dispute and Mayor Bigelow's reputation for civic virtue enhanced even beyond its already substantial dimensions.

By the end of April city voters approved a special \$250,000 tax assessment for the building of a permanent levee. Despite an empty city treasury and a cholera epidemic which depressed the economy and forced the raising of funds by bonds as well as taxation, the levee was constructed between September and December, 1850. Its cost fully disabused Sacramentans of that article of faith which had maintained that an adequate levee could be thrown up at a small expense, but there it stood, running nine miles along the northern and western boundaries of the city. Beginning at high ground near Brighton, the earthworks ran along the southern bank of the American River to Twelfth Street, then rejoined the bank near where the lines of A and Fifth streets intersected. Crossing Sutter Lake, where a sluice gate was built into the levee, it ran southward along the Sacramento River beyond the city limits where it turned east and terminated at the Sutterville heights. Surveying the 121,000 cubic yards of soil that now testified to the seriousness of their purpose, Sacramentans agreed that "to all human appearance another inundation is impossible."<sup>11</sup>



*An incongruous holiday atmosphere reappeared in the second and third of Sacramento's floods in 1852 and 1853. J Street witnessed "an aquatic carnival," and "the town was afloat on a frolic."*



The impossible occurred less than a year and a half later when heavy late winter rains began swelling the two rivers at the beginning of March, 1852. On Sunday evening, March 7, the full force of the flood tide, which had already disrupted communications outside the city, hit the untested levee. As water lapped at the levee top, the area housing the sluice gate began to weaken. A visitor to the city described the ensuing scene:

Last night at 12-1/2 o'clock we were suddenly awoken by the tolling of the alarm bell and made aware of the impending danger. The levee on the Sacramento had given way in one small place, and the opening became every moment larger. I run [sic] to the place of the disaster and assisted in stopping the opening, but all endeavors were fruitless and the water widened it every moment more and more and gushed through with increasing impetuosity. All at once a large piece of the levee on which we stood was loosened under our feet and gave way with a tremendous crash. I was with a number of others thrown into the water and taken away with the current for a considerable distance.<sup>12</sup>

The slough filled to the brim with terrifying suddenness, as the water swept away the bridge at the sluice-gate and cut the city off at its north end. Mayor J. R. Hardenburgh, who had been laboring that night to save the levee, recalled having to walk for some miles along the bank of the American River before reaching high ground and finding a path to return to the city.<sup>13</sup> The frantic levee tenders could not wait for the mayor's return, for the slough had begun reaching the level of I Street at Second, and from there the water threatened to run on to J Street. At first a temporary levee was thrown up along I Street to Second, but when the water began flowing into the city at Seventh Street, the levee on I was continued to that place. But no emergency efforts could save the city from this second flood. The business district had already flooded, and the permanent levee along the American was giving way. By daybreak the extent of the debacle was revealed: K Street was under two feet of water; J Street was under slightly less; other por-



tions of the city were covered to a depth that in low spots reached a full twelve feet. In fact virtually the entire city, with the major exceptions of the knoll on Tenth Street, Sutter's Fort, and Poverty Ridge, was under water. "An unbroken sea" was both an appropriate metaphor and, until the rivers began falling on Thursday, March 11, not far from reality.<sup>14</sup>

In some ways the experiences of 1850 were now repeated. Stranded on the knoll at the Tenth Street Plaza and sharing the spot of dry land with "wagons, tents, cattle and horses, in confused and motley assemblage,"<sup>15</sup> miserable refugees huddled with the belongings they had been able to carry with them. The incongruous holiday atmosphere reappeared as well. Bizarre water craft were tested on the flooded streets, including hide and metal "boats" and at least one side-wheeler. All the craft, it was reported, were "filled with people, out on business or pleasure, —all, too, joyous and happy. It was, in fact, an aquatic carnival, and the town was afloat on a frolic." As for losses, the past was fortunately not precisely repeated. No lives were lost, and warnings before the levees gave way enabled many Sacramentans to remove their most valuable goods to high ground. Farmers, such as William Dresser who lost \$1,000 in garden vegetables, staggered from their losses, but the 1850 levee had held back the rivers long enough to save the business community from ruin.<sup>16</sup>

Post-mortems and new planning proceeded even as the city remained submerged. Had Sacramento miscalculated in banning wagon traffic from the levee which would have helped pack down the dirt embankment? Had the city not erred even more seriously in carrying the levee around the slough, for had it not been the makeshift I Street levee alone that had stemmed the flood tide?

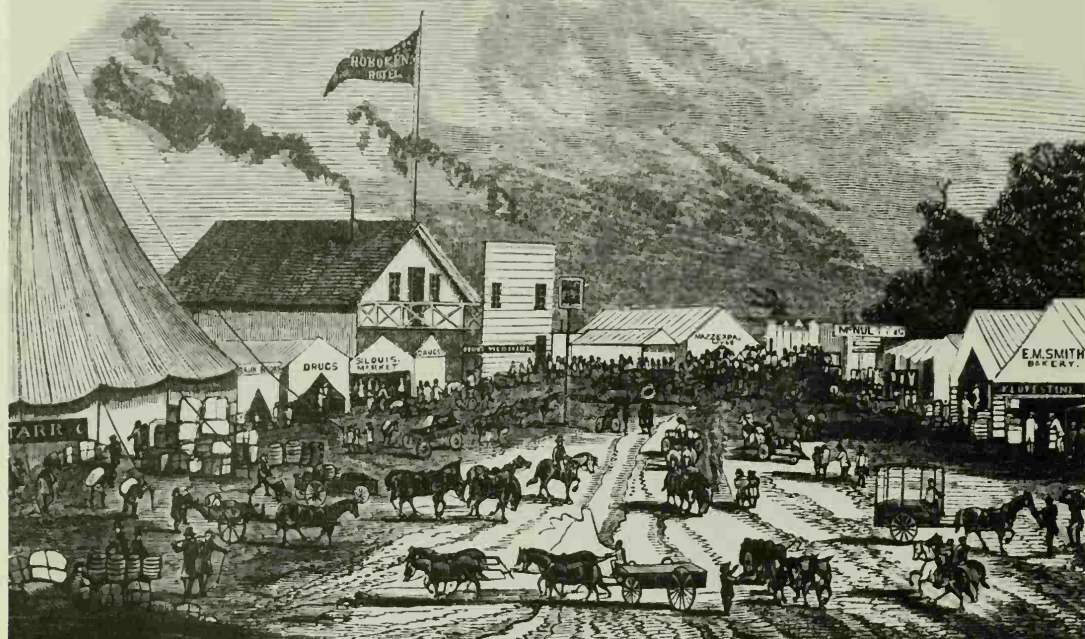
On March 10, the mayor called for a new levee to be built on I Street from the Front Street levee up to Fifth Street, and from Fifth along the edge of Sutter Lake and then to a meeting with the 1850 levee along the Ameri-

can River. The council adopted the proposal, and the project was begun in mid-September, 1852. By November work on the \$50,000 alteration had progressed to the stage where Sacramentans felt secure once again. Despite prospects of renewed flooding in the coming winter, property values rose through the autumn. The phenomenon was attributed mainly to "the general feeling which prevails of the perfect exemption hereafter of the city against inundation."<sup>17</sup>

Winter rescinded the exemption by drenching the Sacramento Valley with more than three feet of rain. In the city itself, the swollen American forced a break about thirty feet wide in the new I Street levee. Hurried repairs kept flooding to a minimum, but three weeks later on December 19, the American River levee gave way along an eighty-foot stretch. Before it could be repaired more minor flooding hit the business district, where streets were soon covered to a depth of several inches. Although damage was light and the water subsided quickly, part of the city was still flooded as late as December 25. More rain followed. By New Year's Eve the Sacramento River was running two feet higher than in the 1850 flood. But then the levee along the American broke once again. By 1:00 A.M. on New Year's Day, 1853, the *Union* reported, "the floods had come in upon the city a second time in good earnest."<sup>18</sup> Daybreak revealed K Street under a minimum of four feet, with low spots under as much as six feet of water. J Street was flooded to depths of two to four feet. South of K Street, it became impossible to remain on the first floor of a house. The cross streets were flooded below Fifth Street nearly all the way to I, and above Fifth the flooding extended to H Street.

By this time, an outward display of frivolity had become a means for publicly affirming an inner certainty concerning the city's survival in the face of a catastrophe. During the December flooding, the din from oarsmen in the streets had been enough to make one believe that "the lunatics of a hundred hospitals had been sent here

(continued)



"Hoboken's main thoroughfare (it had but one) presented a pleasant spectacle of crowded business from morning till night. At times so dense was the jam of vehicles that foot passengers found it almost impossible to thread their way successfully among them." Sacramento Pictorial Union, April, 1853.

# SACRAMENTO,circa 1854



Sutterville, Sacramento's rival to the south in the early 1850s, offered businessmen free lots on high ground, but had little else to recommend it as a commercial nerve center.

- A - Sutter Lake
- B - R Street Levee
- C - Poverty Hill
- D - Meeting point of the SVRR tracks and the R Street Levee
- E - Rabel's Tannery
- F - The raised business district, bordered at Sutter Lake by the I Street Levee

American River rechanneling of the 1860's

G = Presumed site of Hoboken



to assist in the uproar." Once again boating became the rage. J Street was a particularly favored location, and by generous estimates up to 500 craft plied its length. Because it was New Year's Day, families out making their calls cheerily waved handkerchiefs as their boats glided past one another. In the four years that there had been a Sacramento, disease, fire, and flood had struck like biblical plagues, yet the city remained. Of course scourges of this sort were shrugged off in many frontier settlements as elements of earthly travail, or as modes of involuntary penance decreed in heaven. To survive them was a source of the courage needed to endure future afflictions. It was this stage through which the valley's key settlement passed in late 1852 and early 1853. First the Great Fire of November which leveled whole sections of the town; then another winter of flood. "The people of Sacramento," the *Union* remarked in a statement touching the heart of the matter, "have become inured to hardships and injurious visitations." Fittingly, Sacramento rose out of its ashes and mire. By February it was bustling again.<sup>19</sup>

**B**ut moral triumphs alone would not suffice to make a city. The dreary winter floods, augmented in April by a final and more minor inundation, precipitated a major rethinking of how to secure Sacramento against more such disastrous seasons. The city's leaders understood very well that no amount of civic stoicism could alone assure survival, especially in view of the grim competition Sacramento faced in its drive for commercial dominance. After all, they reasoned, how many times could the city be flooded and still attract business on the basis of its desirable geographic setting? Other potential commercial centers along the river highways, Hoboken and Sutterville for example, commanded high ground if not locations as strategic as Sacramento's at the junction

of the rivers. During the latest deluge both these sites were successful in attracting, at least temporarily, many presumably well-rooted Sacramento city merchants. The desire to restore the disrupted commerce between Sacramento and its gold country markets was felt intensely, especially because the November fire had destroyed so much merchandise that profits would be high on the goods which remained.

Some displaced merchants had removed to Sutter's Fort, a site in decay but nevertheless on high ground; more men took off for other points along the American River, the most favored of which sat a mile downstream from Brighton. Here a city of tents housing dozens of businesses sprang up. One onlooker noted that its single street, merchandise heaped along its length, was "filled with wagons and pack mules from the interior awaiting their loads, the teamsters preferring to pay twenty dollars per ton extra to the labor and expense of a journey of four miles to the city." By the second week in January, 1853, the thriving new town was being supplied from the Sacramento waterfront by four steamboats. In two weeks \$80,000 in gold passed into the hands of the Sacramento merchants at the site. Dignified by the name "Hoboken" and a "mayor" who had been selected in a fit of good humor, the trading post was not abandoned until the roads dried out in mid-February.<sup>20</sup>

Hoboken may have been mostly an augury, but Sutterville posed a certain threat. Located along the Sacramento River south of the city, it had been vying with Sacramento for dominance since 1849. Its command of high ground in times of flood was its only advantage, but this was an attractive one through the winter of 1852-53, when some of Sacramento's fleeing businessmen set up their tents in Sutterville. Some fifteen of them pledged fortune and sacred honor to a permanent relocation, and Sutterville's speculators augmented the attractions of their site by offering lots and cash to Sacramento businessmen who would move there. The attempt at town-building ultimately failed, and most of



*Contemplated waterfront improvements, including a new levee system, were the important subject of this 1856 lithograph.*



the merchants soon found it necessary to choose between Suttersville and prosperity,<sup>21</sup> but the experience also wiped out the last vestiges of Sacramento's complacency. "We must give the world confidence in the stability and permanence of the place,"<sup>22</sup> urged a worried businessman with a stake in the Sacramento economy. Following the 1853 flood, Sacramento attempted to overcome its menace with more vigor and imagination than ever before witnessed.

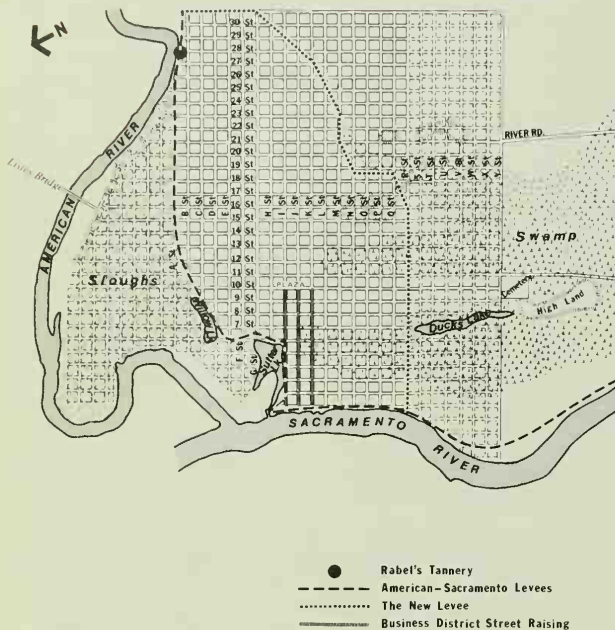
The ensuing drive for flood-free real estate had three main aspects. One was an attempt to improve transportation to the city outskirts by building an all-weather wagon road. J Street, running through the heart of the business district, was graded and planked by property

owners along its length from Front to Twelfth streets, and by the city from Twelfth to the city limits. Beyond, a planked toll road was constructed to run to Brighton. In addition, experiences with the recent flood spurred construction of the Sacramento Valley Railroad, the West's first commercial line, which ran initially from Sacramento to Folsom.<sup>23</sup>

The second aspect of the town's drive to protect itself and secure a decisive advantage over its rivals involved building and improving the levees. By the beginning of 1854 the city's investment in levees grew by \$150,000, and by the time most of the work was completed, the capital outlay had soared to \$600,000 above the original 1850 levee costs. Knowledgeable citizens later estimated

*A bird's eye view of Sacramento in 1857 by George Baker showed the growing community aptly named "the City of the (Flood) Plain."*

## SACRAMENTO, circa 1860



the total cost of levee building prior to 1861 at between \$700,000 and \$1,500,000,<sup>24</sup> the latter amount reflecting the interest paid out on the city's various bond issues. In addition, the earthworks along I Street, first constructed in 1852, were extended to Sixth Street and generally improved. The levee on the Sacramento was rebuilt in most places to meet a high-grade specification of 22½ feet above the low-water mark, and in some places moved as much as 300 feet from where it stood originally. Finally, a project was begun to complete the levee encirclement of the main inhabited portion of the city. The New Levee, as it was called, began at R Street and the Sacramento River, ran along R Street to just below Sixteenth Street, and then followed the meandering path of Burns Slough in a northeasterly direction.

Meeting M Street at about Twenty-fourth Street, the New Levee continued past Sutter's Fort to a meeting at Thirty-first and A streets with the levee built up on A Street.<sup>25</sup>

The third phase in the city's battle with the river was Sacramento's decision to raise the level of several city streets.<sup>26</sup> Of the measures taken to prevent future flooding, none approached street-raising for audacity, and the accomplishment remains to this day one of the unnatural wonders of Sacramento. The work was accomplished mainly in the 1860s, but the flooding of 1852-1853 stimulated the very first of such efforts. Under municipal supervision, but with funds raised through assessments against the property owners along the streets being elevated, J and K streets were filled to Eighth Street, as were the numbered cross streets down to Front Street. Property owners on I Street continued the filling of their street from where the levee left it on Sixth to the public square four blocks further east. Incidental and expensive inconveniences abounded, especially because owners needed to raise floors and reconstruct facades as the street level rose in front of their buildings, but this apparently seemed a reasonable price to pay for a three or four-foot rise in the level of the business district which, in all, cost over \$250,000. By 1854, then, with the improving of transportation underway, the building of an encircling levee, and the raising of the business district, a prudent observer might well believe Sacramento's fight against flood was over. As though in recognition of such earnest efforts, there followed more than seven fat years in which the city prospered, unthreatened by the rivers.

Towards the end of winter in 1861 the city's good fortune began changing when melting snow swelled the American River to a height last matched in the floods nearly eight years earlier. Eyes were riveted on the bend of the American River near the intersection of its southern bank and Twenty-eighth Street, a location known as Rabel's Tannery. Here the river coursed through a



sharp U-shaped turn, severely eroding the river bank and the A Street levee. Concern over flooding at this spot had marked even the relatively eventless interlude from 1853 to 1861. Any time the rivers rose, so did concern for the integrity of the levees, even though the unsettling effects of such talk bothered real estate investors almost as much as an actual flood itself, and a popular theory maintained that the large scale diversion of water to reservoirs for mining or agriculture had permanently lowered the rivers' flow. In October, 1860, for example, the city's levee committee warned of "fearful inroads" on the bank at Rabel's, and a wing-dam was constructed on the site to check the erosion.<sup>27</sup> But on March 28, 1861, the overburdened American washed out bridges along its length, destroyed the new wing-dam, and then breached the levee. The first flood since 1853 was upon the city. Though the waters receded very quickly and damage was minor, Sacramento's lucky streak had ended.

The following winter was extraordinarily wet. All over the valley rivers overflowed their banks, and the Sacramento Valley Railroad could send trains no further

than Poverty Ridge on the way to Folsom. On the Sacramento River the steamboat *Swallow* careened out of control and took some casualties as the vessel struck a bridge pier. At 6:00 A.M. on December 9, 1861, the levee near Rabel's Tannery gave way. At first there seemed to be no danger to the city because the break was to the east of the tannery between Rabel's and Smith's Gardens. Though this meant the flooding of the countryside, it also meant that the city's encircling levee system had not been breached. The New Levee would now, presumably, repay the city's investment in it. In addition was the encouraging fact that the break in the levee itself relieved some of the fierce pressure at Rabel's Tannery. Uneasy but hopeful, Sacramentans made few preparations for disaster. Then catastrophe occurred, bringing a "Great Calamity" widely recognized as the most destructive flood the city had ever experienced.<sup>28</sup>

Ironically, the flood's severity resulted in part from the improvements constructed after the flooding of the 1850s: the Sacramento Valley Railroad (SVRR) and the New Levee. The SVRR tracks entered the city from the direction of Brighton at R Street. There the route ran





atop the R Street levee from Sixteenth Street to Front Street. Because the SVRR ran on its own embankment before joining the levee, it in effect created a walled-in corner northeast of the intersection of R and Sixteenth streets, precisely along the drainage path of Burns Slough. The railroad company had built a bridge for the tracks just east of the levee to permit the flow to continue south of the embankment, but this opening had either been filled in or clogged with debris. When the flood water pouring in through the levee break along the American followed the path of Burns Slough to the intersection, it created a menacing lake at Sacramento's southeast corner.

Quickly the turbulent lake rose to the height of the embankments and damaged the city's levee. A bare two hours after the break along the American occurred, the city was awash. By early afternoon even the raised business district stood several feet under the tide. The R

Street levee was then cut open to permit the accumulated flood waters to flow on south of the city, but this solution created dangers of its own. The lake that had been formed on the north of the R Street levee had already lifted more than two-dozen houses off their foundations when the levee was cut at Fifth Street. The houses were carried off and dashed to pieces as they passed the levee. Some of the occupants had been rescued earlier under terrifying circumstances, but a Mr. Isaacs remained on board, determined to go down with his home. He reportedly jumped to safety only as the building "was about to clear for Sutterville." Assuredly his move was uncommonly melodramatic, but thousands of Sacramentans shared fully in the horrors of the flood of December 9, 1861. Some would recall for the rest of their lives a wall of water rushing toward their homes.<sup>29</sup> Others would remember abandoning the street-level floors of houses and retreating with treasured belong-



*From December, 1861, to the following February, Sacramento endured its worst winter flood. Although the city had dramatically matured in the flood-free years since the early 1850s, as the view (below) of K Street between Second and Third indicates, many people questioned the city's geographic viability.*



ings to an upper story. Many were forced to abandon their homes and to seek that familiar refuge, Poverty Ridge, which rose as an island outside the levee line. "We found ourselves a long mile from the city," remembered one of these refugees,

on what was known as Poverty Ridge, and then the water was rushing through the breaks in the R Street levee with such force that we dared not attempt to go further, so we had to remain on the Ridge all night, and I need not say that it was a night of terrible suspense to many of us, for we could know nothing of the condition of our families. We only knew that between us and them was a raging torrent carrying death, devastation and ruin in its course, and that from a distance beyond the reach of our assistance we could distinctly hear the despairing cries of men, women and children who were expecting every moment that their homes would be afloat and themselves borne with them beyond the possibility of mortal arms to rescue them.<sup>30</sup>

Under such circumstances, rapacity and philanthropy

thrived side by side. Stories of the helpless being abandoned because they could not pay extortionate fees became a staple of local history during this flood. Strikingly different were the experiences of hundreds of flood victims who found refuge in the Pavilion, a large new State Fair building at Sixth and M streets. There the Howard Benevolent Society provided blankets and hot soup for Sacramentans needing shelter until after New Year's Day.

The worst of the December 9 flood was over by the following afternoon, but similar disasters followed in its wake for the rest of the winter. On January 9, 1862, the levee at Rabel's Tannery again gave way, despite attempts to strengthen the line since the last break. The river levels were even higher than they had been in December, but the path taken by the raging water into the city made this deluge less memorable than the last.<sup>31</sup> Water gradually rolled in from the east across an even front, and by the morning of January 10, the southern part of Sacramento was under two and a half feet of water. Following a familiar scenario, businessmen raised their goods onto platforms, making educated guesses as to the height of the waters flowing in from the east; the Howard Benevolent Society fed and housed refugees at the Pavilion; women and children watched at second-story windows; hundreds of boats, including bathtubs, plied the Sacramento canals; heroes made rescues, most notably at Burns Slough where some thirty stranded levee workers found shaky refuge by clinging to the roof of a building through the violent night; other men labored frantically to close the levee breaches; and Sacramentans with studied contempt for their afflictions made merry, or carried on as usual. It was during this flood that Leland Stanford was rowed to the capitol to be inaugurated as governor. Returning home, as an enduring but unsubstantiated legend would have it, the Stanfords found their piano floating in the reception room and so moored it to the banister before retreating to the upper story.<sup>32</sup>

Other floods tormented the city in December, later on in January, 1862, and at the beginning of February. Not until the following August did the last of the standing pools of water finally evaporate. Though the incredible winter had brought devastating flooding all across the Pacific Coast, Sacramentans took little solace in having had so much company in their misery. They questioned, as they had not since 1853, the city's very viability. "Sacramento must act now," the *Union* warned, "or be blotted from the map of cities."<sup>33</sup> Not surprisingly, the city did act. During the years that followed the levees were rebuilt, the business district was raised again, and two serpentine stretches of the American River were rechanneled. By these arrangements the city would come

close to victory in its dozen years of battle with the rivers.

Levee work proceeded under the authority of a new board of city levee commissioners, a five-member elected body. By 1863 the levees were raised four feet above the high water mark of the previous year. The costs of this project were considerable—the stretch along the Sacramento from P to Y streets was estimated at \$36,000 alone—but no one suggested the work was an extravagance.<sup>34</sup> Street raising engendered more controversy, but it, too, was becoming a reality by 1863. With the crumbling of diehard opposition by 1867, high-grading the business district became an unquestioned civic act. Two years later, though tapering operations were to continue for some time longer, the entire district



Partially tamed by the I Street levee in the 1850s and the building of the Central Pacific tracks in the 1860s, Sutter Slough was permanently obliterated by landfill shortly after the turn of the century.



Civil optimism to the contrary, earthen levees such as these breastworks south of town (left) failed to hold back the water at its highest stages.

of I, J, and K streets from Front Street to the Plaza at Tenth was permanently perched on a mountainous quantity of hauled-in fill.<sup>35</sup>

Straightening the American River was a less audacious project, but perhaps even more necessary. Near its mouth and at Rabel's Tannery, the river followed a tortuous path that caused overflow when the waters ran high and heavily. Accordingly, the river was guided in both places into straighter slough channels which were actually old river beds. From late 1862 to the present, the American has joined the Sacramento about a mile further north than before, and today a city dump unceremoniously commemorates the problem site of Rabel's Tannery.<sup>36</sup>

Sacramento endured a final flood in February of 1878 resulting from the collapse of a gopher-ridden stretch of levee south of the city at Lovedall's Ranch. Because the levee commissioners had to wait for a natural recession of the flood tide to make repairs, flooding continued within the city limits for two weeks, mostly south of the R Street levee but at times to the north as well.<sup>37</sup>

In response a final levee was constructed within the city limits, running along Y Street from Front to the high ground of Poverty Ridge.

Neither the R Street or Y Street embankment remains today, the first having been removed in 1903 and the second in 1922. By the late years of the century, floods in the streets were memories rather than active dangers. Fewer and fewer inhabitants remembered the years when survival hung in the balance, the times when the *Daily Bee* newspaper was moved to reflect:

Ever since the planting of Sacramento at the confluence of two mighty rivers, she has had to fight for existence with an energy and constancy which have developed her nerve and muscle and proved her vitality beyond that of any city of modern times.<sup>38</sup>

Energy . . . constancy . . . nerve . . . muscle . . . vitality—these words aptly describe Sacramento's struggle to survive the mortal flood threats of its first quarter-century. Indeed, the city secured itself by civic efforts of a herculean nature. The first task, sparked by the flood of January, 1850, was the building of a levee system. It is



not surprising that Hardin Bigelow, one of the first city fathers to take up the cause, became Sacramento's first municipal hero, because without the levee there could be no city. But this was only a beginning. Within two decades Sacramentans altered the natural environment itself by changing the course of the American River and, literally, raising the city's business district to new heights. Doomsayers living in rival cities grew silent. Sacramento had secured the benefits of its rivers, so vital to its commercial success in the nineteenth century, and freed itself of their terrors.

That the saga of confronting the floods became an important vehicle of civic self-celebration is understandable. Although the floods destroyed much property, they took remarkably few lives. Although some anguished citizens had to be rescued from their inundated homes, the lasting historical image of the events is one of civic stoicism. Having lost everything, the businessman makes a holiday out of his misfortune because his will to rebound is a greater asset than his wrecked inventory; with the city under water, the wife of a businessman urges that this is the best time to buy property.<sup>39</sup> This kind of doggedness confirmed Sacramento's moral legitimacy as a commercial and governmental center and as the major city of the valley. For this reason the great floods and the constructive energies they liberated hold an important place in California's history. With the recent development of ecological consciousness, some may be struck by the arrogance of insisting on building a city where no city had a natural right to be, but as might be said about the whole of California, the monumental achievement, however flawed, remains.

The maps on pages 8 and 12 and prints on pages 6 and the top of page 9 are courtesy the California Department of Parks and Recreation. The photos on the bottom of page 9 and on page 16 are from the California Section Picture Collection, California State Library, Sacramento. The photo on page 17 is courtesy the Sacramento Museum and History Department; on page 15, courtesy the Bancroft Library; on page 14, courtesy the Southern Pacific Company. All the others are from the CHS Library.

## Notes

1. Thomas H. Thompson and Albert Augustus West, *History of Sacramento County, California* (Oakland: Thompson and West, 1880), p. 72.
2. J. Horace Culver, "Historical Sketch, 1851," reprinted in John Frederick Morse, *The First History of Sacramento City* (Sacramento: Sacramento Book Collectors Club, 1945), p. 110. Culver and Morse wrote their histories for publication in the city directories for 1851 and 1853-54 respectively. A good description of this flood is in the [Sacramento] *Placer Times*, January 19, 1850, p. 2.
3. Morse, *First History*, 62.
4. J. B. D. Stillman, *The Gold Rush Letters of J. B. D. Stillman* (Palo Alto: Lewis Osborne, 1967), p. 44; Charles E. Nagel, "A Fight for Survival: Floods, Riots, and Disease in Sacramento, 1850" (unpublished MA Thesis, Sacramento State College, 1965), pp. 78-79; Joseph A. McGowan, *History of the Sacramento Valley* (New York and West Palm Beach: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1961), 1:115.
5. Morse, *First History*, 62-63; *San Francisco Daily Alta California*, January 14, 1850, p. 1. A \$3 million estimate is reported in Nagel, "Fight for Survival," 82.
6. *Daily Alta California*, January 26, 1850, p. 2; *Placer Times*, January 26, 1850, p. 2.
7. Morse, *First History*, 62; *Placer Times*, January 19, 1850, p. 2.
8. Nagel, "Fight for Survival," 94-96.
9. Nagel, "Fight for Survival," 96-99; *Placer Times*, March 30, 1850, p. 2 and April 6, 1850, p. 2.
10. Unfortunately, the episode generated much confusion among local historians as to the precise month in which the events transpired. Some venerated historical sources inexplicably maintain the building of this emergency levee occurred a month earlier than is actually the case and prior to, instead of after, Bigelow's election to office. Morse, *First History*, p. 65, erroneously reported the flood as having been averted in March, support for which exists in a resolution in praise of Bigelow's efforts in the Sacramento City Council, Minutes, July 7, 1850, Office of the City Clerk, Sacramento, California. These are the only two primary sources pointing to March. All others place the event in April, including weather data and reports; Joseph Augustus Benton, Journal, Vol. 1, entry for April 9, 1850, Joseph Augustus Benton MSS., California State Library, Sacramento, California; Culver, "Historical Sketch," 110; and contemporary news accounts in the *Sacramento Transcript*, April 8, 1850, p. 2; April 23, 1850, p. 2; and November 29, 1850, p. 2; the *Placer Times*, April 13, 1850, p. 2 and April 22, 1850, p. 2; and the *Daily Alta California*, April 10, 1850, p. 2. The Morse account, repeated through the years and embellished upon in subsequent histories, is perpetuated in the most recent full-length city history: Thor Severson, *Sacramento, An Illustrated History*:



- 1839 to 1874 (San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1973), pp. 72-73.
11. Culver, "Historical Sketch," 110.
12. Heinrich Schliemann, *Schliemann's First Visit to America, 1850-1851*, ed. by Shirley H. Weber (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1942), p. 73.
13. United States District Court, Northern District of California, *The United States vs. John A. Sutter*, in *California Land Claims*, vol. 25, California State Library, Sacramento, testimony of J. R. Hardenburgh, May 31, 1860, p. 408.
14. Edmund Lorenzo Barber and George Holbrook Baker, *Sacramento Illustrated* (Sacramento: Barber and Baker, 1855; 1955 facsimile edition by the Sacramento Book Collectors Club), 64.
15. Thompson and West, *Sacramento County*, 69.
16. [Sacramento] *Daily Union*, March 9, 1852, p. 2; William Dresser to Sarah Dresser, May 1852, Dresser Family MSS., Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.
17. *Daily Union*, November 10, 1852, p. 1.
18. *Daily Union*, January 3, 1853, p. 2. This is the source from which the following description of the January flood has been taken.
19. Joseph Lamson, journal entry for December 19, 1852, in "Nine Years' Adventures in California from September 1852 to September 1866," p. 11, Joseph Lamson MSS., Bancroft Library; William Dresser, February 14, 1853, Dresser Family MSS.
20. Journal entry for January 12, 1853, in "Nine Years' Adventures," 13, Lamson MSS.; McGowan, *Sacramento Valley*, 116.
21. *United States vs. Sutter*, testimony of James McClatchy, June 2, 1860, p. 431.
22. Quoted in Barbara Lagomarsino, "Early Attempts to Save the Site of Sacramento by Raising Its Business District" (unpublished MA Thesis, Sacramento State College, 1969), p. 11.
23. McGowan, *Sacramento Valley*, 116; *United States vs. Sutter*, McClatchy testimony, 429.
24. *United States vs. Sutter*, Hardenburgh testimony, 412, McClatchy testimony, 429.
25. *Daily Union*, December 11, 1861, p. 1.
26. Lagomarsino, "Early Attempts," 14-20. This thesis is the authoritative account of street-raising efforts in Sacramento.
27. Eugene Itogawa, "New Channels for the American River," in *Sketches of Old Sacramento: A Tribute to Joseph A. McGowan*, ed. by Jesse M. Smith (Sacramento: Sacramento County Historical Society, 1976), pp. 216-217.
28. *Daily Union*, December 11, 1861, p. 1. The following account is from this source unless otherwise noted.
29. Caroline Leonard Coggins, "Growing Up With Sacramento," in *Sacramento Union*, magazine section, August 13, 1939.
30. George Tisdale Bromley, *The Long Ago and the Later On* (San Francisco: A. M. Robertson, 1904), p. 57.
31. *Daily Union*, January 11, 1862, p. 3.
32. Boutwell Dunlap, "Some Facts Concerning Leland Stanford and his Contemporaries in Placer County," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, 2 (October 1923): 209, reports the floating piano incident. The story is effectively debunked in Caroline Wenzel, "Finding Facts about the Stanfords in the California State Library," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, 19 (September, 1940): 251.
33. *Report of the Board of Health [of Sacramento] for the Year Ending March 31, 1863* (Sacramento: James Anthony & Co., 1863), p. 4; *Daily Union*, December 11, 1861, p. 2.
34. "Specification for the Construction of the City Levee," in Minutes of June 7, 1862, Sacramento Board of Levee Commissioners, *Records, April 1862-March 1878*, p. 31, Sacramento Museum and History Commission. See also the account written by one of the commissioners at the end of 1862: Henry T. Holmes, "The Levee at Sacramento," Henry T. Holmes MSS., Bancroft Library.
35. Lagomarsino, "Early Attempts," *passim*.
36. Report of Engineer A. R. Jackson, September 6, 1862, Board of Levee Commissioners, *Records*, 99; Itogawa, "New Channels," 211.
37. Minutes of February 13 and March 22, 1878, Board of Levee Commissioners, *Records*, 464, 471.
38. *Daily Bee*, December 11, 1861, quoted in Lagomarsino, "Early Attempts," v.
39. Mary E. Ackley, *Crossing the Plains and Early Days in California* (San Francisco: by the author, 1928), p. 52.

# CRUSADE OR CIVIL WAR ?

## The Pullman Strike in California

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Captivated by the emerging prominence of union leader Eugene V. Debs and a midwestern drama of violent confrontation between strikers and federal troops, historians of the Pullman strike of 1894 have failed the West. Understandably, they have looked at important factors contributing to this most important and disruptive strike of the late nineteenth century: severe nation-wide economic depression; deteriorating living conditions among factory workers in the "model" Pullman company town just south of Chicago, Illinois; the meteoric rise and collapse of the American Railway Union, sponsor of the strike; and the maelstrom of events following use of federal injunctions and troops which resulted in the deaths of over a dozen participants. Modern-day historians have also examined the economic, political, and legal aftereffects of the strike, including precedence for use of injunctions in labor disputes and the new stature gained by Debs, who subsequently became the foremost leader of the socialist movement in the United States.

Missing the trees for the forest, few historians have given attention to regional problems and responses to the nationwide strike. The events of the Pullman conflict varied considerably from place to place, and in many western states the dispute assimilated other highly charged issues which greatly influenced the strike's local impact. The consequences of this phenomenon proved particularly notable in California.

In the golden state the initial boycott of Pullman-manufactured railroad cars and the ensuing strike posed a unique dilemma. Since the 1860's the overbearing presence of the Central Pacific-Southern Pacific Railroad had embittered many Californians, and they, with much of the press, sympathized with Deb's American Railway Union (ARU) and its struggle against the rail-

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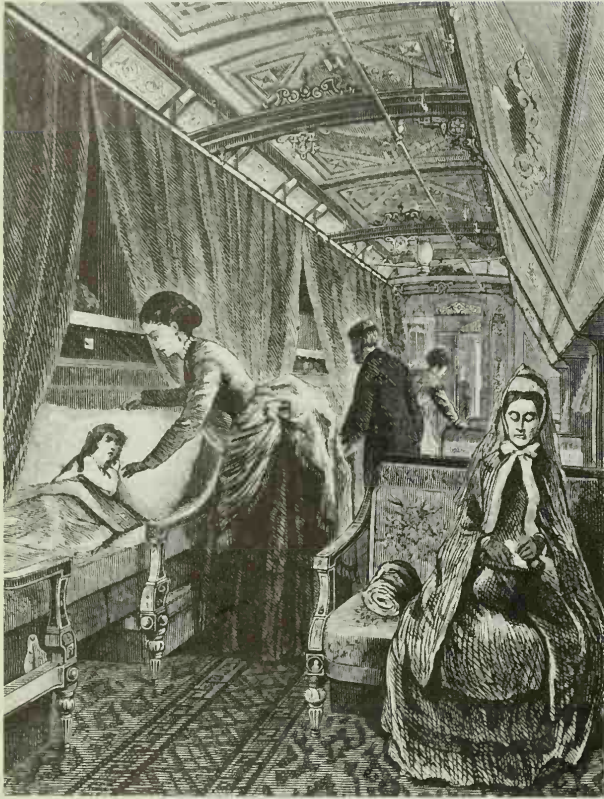
William Ray, a native Californian, has worked in curatorial and administrative capacities in several museums and historical agencies in California. He is currently Director of Museums for Hillsborough County (Tampa), Florida.



*Blacksmiths at the Sacramento shops of the Central Pacific/Southern Pacific c.1890, some of the city's several thousand unskilled workers who supported the American Railway Union strike.*



*Luxurious interior of a railroad car manufactured in George Pullman's "model" town south of Chicago. Workers refused to service Pullman cars after he cut his employees' wages.*



road. On the other hand, surging labor militancy had recently resulted in violent confrontation in such places as Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, Haymarket Square in Chicago, and steel plants in Pennsylvania. Viewed in conjunction with these events, many people suspected that the Pullman boycott was part of a workingmen's conspiracy to gain economic and political power.

By mid-1894, as the Pullman strike took effect, crippling California economically and isolating it from the East, most citizens were so resentful either of the railroad's past arrogance or the workers' audacity that they made hasty and uncompromising judgments. Magnifying the railroad's culpability or fearing the merging of

unionism with anarchy, virtually every citizen and institution in the state took sides in the dispute. With the lines drawn, the strike assumed the character of a crusade—or of a civil war: labor against capital, poverty against wealth, citizen against monopoly corporation, anarchy against democracy. That the "crusade" was in fact a desperate attempt by unskilled railroad workers to secure the rights and protections of union membership is a sober after-assessment made over the distance of years. In the nineties, the issues led to confrontation which spawned violence, a situation easily equated with civil war in the fearful disquiet of the times.<sup>1</sup>

Like a chain of falling dominoes, the business depression following the Panic of 1893 had seriously curtailed trade on the nation's railroads.<sup>2</sup> Railroad companies reacted to hard times, among other ways, by reducing orders for the opulent Pullman Palace Sleeping Cars. George M. Pullman, railroad car-builder supreme, attempted to reverse his decline in sales by lowering the price of his equipment. He accomplished this expedient by cutting his workers' wages, the largest cost incurred in producing the elaborate cars. Unabashedly he ordered several wage cuts in one year—one of which amounted to a 30 percent reduction. Coupled with high rents charged for company houses and Pullman's declaration of a normal 8 percent stock dividend shortly after the most severe wage cut, his actions caused a walkout which closed the huge Pullman factory outside of Chicago.<sup>3</sup> For more than a month workmen attempted to arbitrate their differences with Pullman, but the puritanical industrialist refused any concessions. In desperation, the striking workmen appealed to Eugene V. Debs and his new American Railway Union (ARU) for assistance in bringing Pullman to terms.

Barely a year old, Debs' new union was virtually untested and little known nationally. A new concept in labor organization, it aimed to develop a union which represented all railway workers, including the skilled railroad craftsmen already unionized in railway brother-

hoods. In reality the infant union drew most of its members from the ranks of the unskilled, but if successful in its goal, it would have become the single most powerful union in the United States. To move ahead, the ARU needed publicity, recognition, and members. Involvement in the Pullman strike offered just such an opportunity, and although this move was a big gamble for a new organization, the prize was possible control of unionized railroad labor.<sup>4</sup>

Accordingly, on June 27, 1894, Debs ordered ARU members between Chicago and the Pacific Ocean to boycott the use of Pullman sleeping cars and to prevent their employment in regular train service. Debs' instructions reached California by telegraph, bringing with them the first labor dispute of national importance to affect the state. The decision also brought a direct attack on the state's largest employer, its most vital transportation link, and some would say, its biggest headache: the Central Pacific-Southern Pacific Railroad. Despotism or cornerstone of state prosperity, the railroad was the most controversial and dominant force in California's "Gilded Age."

Actually, there was little gilding on the harshness of life in 1894. Roaring boom years were a tarnished memory, and claims that California was a "Garden of Eden" seemed blatantly fraudulent. Extending the railroad to California had brought industrialization, urbanization, and many of the same pressures which already faced society in the East. Labor agitation, unemployment, fear of immigration, corporate monopoly, and corruption surfaced in the depression years following the Panic of 1893 as manifestations of frightening trends within developing industrial capitalism.

Surprisingly, by the 1890's California was the most industrialized and one of the most urbanized states in the nation.<sup>5</sup> Only one-fifth of the state's population lived on California's large mechanized farms (one-half the national rate), and new immigration contributed to one of the highest urban growth rates in the country.<sup>6</sup> The

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*By the 1890s California was the most industrialized and one of the most urbanized states in the nation.*

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Southern Pacific added to this phenomenal growth by providing the major communications, service, and transportation connections to the East. Population and commerce naturally concentrated at distribution and junction points along the railroad. Consequently, the railroad strike not only paralyzed transportation, but it also seriously affected the heart of the state's economy and the routine life of its cities and citizens as well.

In the then pre-eminent urban areas of California—Sacramento, San Francisco-Oakland, and Los Angeles—sympathies and actions on all levels of society were tempered and shaped by consideration of the struggle between the Southern Pacific and labor. People living in areas acutely concerned with the railroad monopoly, such as Sacramento and Oakland, made a sometimes awkward choice which generally favored the laborers. In Los Angeles, on the other hand, a city "blessed" with a competing railroad and a notoriously anti-labor press, the ARU received little, and at best, uninspired, support. Strike-related events in these three areas ran the spectrum of emotion, attitude, and violence. The strain brought by the confrontation and the public's reaction exposed important aspects of the communities' structures and revealed both the strengths and frailties in the Southern Pacific's economic and political power.

The strike's impact was heightened in California by its uniqueness, for railroad-labor relations in the state had largely been maintained on an amiable level. In fact, until the Pullman conflict there had never been a serious labor dispute in the history of the Southern Pacific Corporation. The established railway brotherhoods had en-

joyed the almost unprecedented confidence of the Southern Pacific, the press, and the public—a confidence that was fostered by a prevailing anti-strike sentiment, high wage rates for skilled employees, a disinterest in the closed shop, and union brotherhood insistence upon loyalty to the railroad company.<sup>7</sup>

Concerned with maintaining the status quo, railroad managers and brotherhood leaders were alarmed by the ARU and its goal of unifying railroad workers into one irrepressible organization. Naturally, the Southern Pacific feared the bargaining potential of this kind of union, while the brotherhoods felt their autonomy threatened. Especially frightening was the ARU's successful solicitation of unskilled workers, common laborers, and other railwaymen who were outside the organizing sphere of the railway craft unions.

Supported by the prestigious Brotherhoods of Locomotive Engineers, Conductors, Telegraphers, Dispatchers, and Trainmen, the Southern Pacific moved swiftly and decisively to prevent the ARU from gaining a foothold in California.<sup>8</sup> But, in common with most railroad companies, the Southern Pacific was unable to control the dynamic growth of the ARU.

**T**he first California chapter of the ARU was organized at Los Angeles on November 28, 1893, with membership solicited from employees of the Southern Pacific and Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe railroads. Both railroads refused recognition of the new union, and they dismissed and blacklisted known ARU members. Many of the blacklisted union men then went underground and secretly distributed circulars and information about the ARU around the state. In this way they were instrumental in organizing ARU locals in Northern California. By January, 1894, as the national strength of the

union increased unprecedentedly and despite attempts by the railroad to suppress its growth, ARU chapters were chartered openly in Sacramento, San Francisco, and Oakland, with a total membership of several thousand workers.<sup>9</sup>

As a result, on June 28, 1894, only one day after the ARU had instituted its nationwide boycott of the use of Pullman sleeping cars, Southern Pacific operations ground to a halt in California. Strikers took control of most stations and railroad yards (including the main terminals at Sacramento, Oakland, San Jose, Fresno, and Los Angeles, as well as many way-stations) and brought normal activities to a stop. Rails were greased or removed, tracks were blockaded with engines and cars, and in one instance a trestle was burned to prevent the railroad from operating trains manned with brotherhood workers. The ARU had caught the railroad unawares, but its demands that the railroad voluntarily join the Pullman boycott—in which event all other railroad operations could be continued—were promptly denounced by Southern Pacific officials. As a result regular train operations were discontinued and, along with them, the mails, freight, and overland passenger travel.<sup>10</sup> Finally out in the open, the “irresistible” force of ARU imperatives was pitted against the “immovable” prerogatives of railroad management—an explosive situation during the hot California summer of 1894.

The boycott of Pullman cars and the ensuing strike could not have occurred at a more difficult time for California. The depression had been wrecking economic havoc for months. The state and the nation were on nerve's edge about the activities of Coxey's Army in April and May and a possible world-wide anarchist conspiracy (the president of France had been assassinated in June).<sup>11</sup> In California, summer harvest time was at hand, and the railroad was vitally needed to transport produce to the East. To these tensions and economic crises was now added the inconvenience and violence of the Pullman boycott.





As the hub of the Central Pacific-Southern Pacific network, Sacramento was immediately affected by the boycott. Although agriculture, especially wheat farming, dominated the life of the Sacramento Valley, the city itself was a key supply and distribution point. The Southern Pacific maintained its main shop facilities and one of its largest terminals in Sacramento and employed over 3,000 men out of a total urban population of approximately 30,000. Perhaps one-fifth to one-fourth of the city's population was dependent upon the railroad payroll, with merchants and other businessmen also in its economic sphere.<sup>12</sup>

Over 2,100 shopmen and hundreds of other railroad workers rallied to the ARU in Sacramento. Because of the shops, large engine terminal, and maintenance-of-way operations, the Sacramento work force was dominated by men who were not eligible for brotherhood membership, and consequently, the city quickly became a bastion of ARU strength. Reflective of their numbers, the strikers also received the moral support of the city's

mayor, sheriff, merchants, and what appears to have been a sizeable proportion of the citizenry. Southern Pacific's management demanded the arrest of strikers who interfered with its trains, but local officials declined to act, citing their responsibility to the community, not just the railroad.<sup>13</sup> When local authorities made no move against the union, railroad lawyers from many affected companies urged federal officials to make an unprecedented move to break the deadlock. Claiming that interstate commerce and the US mail service were being interrupted—although often the railroads themselves refused to attach mail cars to trains boycotting Pullman cars—the government determined to force the strikers to return to work.<sup>14</sup>

Acting on July 2 on the orders of President Grover Cleveland, United States Attorney General Richard Olney issued instructions to federal attorneys in California and across the country to use injunctions against the ARU. In Sacramento notification of these injunctions was given to the ARU's mediation committee by US

*Regular army troops were brought into Sacramento from San Francisco when national guardsmen broke ranks and joined the strikers and sympathizers.*





Marshal Barry Baldwin and Southern Pacific General Superintendent J. A. Fillmore. But to their surprise, ARU strength was so secure in the area that even a force of federal marshals could not succeed in escorting a mail train out of the yards on July 3. Thwarted by the strikers, Marshal Baldwin appealed to Governor Henry E. Markham for assistance from the national guard. Markham responded quickly and ordered the national guard to furnish whatever aid was necessary to control the situation.<sup>15</sup>

Lack of adequate logistical preparation, equipment, food, and transportation arrangements for the nearly 1,000 guardsmen who were quickly activated caused confusion and bitterness among the troops as they were moved into Sacramento on the night of July 3. The presence of large groups of strikers, holiday crowds, and orders to take possession of the Sacramento railroad terminal forced the ill-prepared guardsmen into hasty action on July 4. Hampered by the press of people, the military had difficulty acting, and the ARU used the situation to its best advantage. Strikers harranged the troops to throw down their arms, and the confusion was heightened when it became apparent that many of the guardsmen from Sacramento and Stockton were employees of the railroad, and ARU members too. Some broke ranks and marched off with strikers and sympathizers from the crowd. The remaining guardsmen, hungry and sweltering in the 105° heat of the day, stood their ground while Marshal Baldwin pleaded with the crowd to disperse. Many troopers fainted from heat prostration.<sup>16</sup>

The ineffectual, and some said mutinous, behavior of the national guard caused Marshal Baldwin to request regular army troops for use in Sacramento. A force of 500 soldiers was dispatched from San Francisco and arrived on July 11 after a cautious trip on a heavily guarded troop train.<sup>17</sup> Between July 4 and July 11 the ARU had maintained firm control in Sacramento, and strikers were fed and sheltered by merchants and townspeople. Al-

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*Major railroad centers were firmly in the hands of strikers, but military presence was building rapidly.*

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though on July 10 President Cleveland had ordered strikers throughout the United States to cease their boycott or face arrest and imprisonment, this order had no immediate effect in California. National guard troops were largely confined to camps established on the lawns of the state capitol where they engaged in much needed training exercises. In the only significant maneuver during this week, guardsmen, reinforced by naval reservists, succeeded in regaining control of the San Jose depot and yards. Otherwise, the major railroad centers in California were firmly in the hands of strikers, although the military presence was building rapidly.<sup>18</sup>

On July 11, national guard troops anxious to redeem their reputations and the newly arrived army soldiers in Sacramento were ordered to capture the Southern Pacific depot which was still held by strikers. But the ARU was one step ahead. Anticipating that the federal soldiers meant business, being advised by their attorney that resisting the army constituted treason, and believing that they could continue to impede train service because they controlled other stations down the line to Oakland, the ARU had abandoned the Sacramento terminal during the night of the tenth. When the troops arrived on the eleventh, they found the station deserted, and they quickly occupied the buildings and yards.<sup>19</sup>

During the next month of federal occupation in Sacramento, seven persons were killed either by sabotage blamed on the ARU (five people died when a troop train was derailed) or in incidents attributed to vengeful soldiers. The press and Sacramento's board of city trustees condemned the military for over-reacting to the



*Standing atop a Pullman car, US Marshal Barry Baldwin harangued strikers at the Sacramento depot to allow a mail train to leave the yard.*



situation in their city, and this denunciation found favor with that portion of the population which continued to support the ARU. The military forces, however, had succeeded in breaking the ARU's control of Sacramento and in re-opening the Central Pacific's transcontinental line.<sup>20</sup>

With Sacramento's urban labor force dominated by railroad employees, most of whom were members of the ARU, it was not surprising the union received strong support in the city. Most railroad employees in Sacramento were shopmen who eagerly sought the benefits of ARU organization because they lived at the most vulnerable employment level. This fact undoubtedly contributed to the fervor of community support and the tenacity of the union's efforts. Unlike the Southern Pacific's managers, Sacramento's railroad workers had roots in the community which strengthened their power during the strike.

Many people also found a link between the ARU

strike and their outspoken hatred for the tyranny of the Southern Pacific monopoly. In fact, the popular support for labor evidenced in Sacramento reflected an anti-railroad campaign that had been waged in California for years. During the strike the Southern Pacific was repeatedly accused of hindering mail shipments to purposely incite government involvement in the strike.<sup>21</sup> The charge cannot be substantiated, but the Southern Pacific's lack of community influence was illustrated by the refusal of local authorities to act against the strikers. Thus, the railroad's clearest option lay in forcing government action against the ARU, and whether by necessity or design the union was repressed by federal forces. A potent force of economic life, the Southern Pacific was often the arbiter and manipulator of events in California. But in this instance, Sacramentans seemed willing to suffer the strike's deprivations as long as the railroad suffered at the same time.

Throughout the initial weeks of the boycott when the

ARU dominated activity in Sacramento, rail traffic was also disrupted in the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Area. Approximately 2,000 ARU strikers took control of the Oakland Mole terminal and yards, and large demonstrations erupted at Southern Pacific headquarters in San Francisco. Southern Pacific's ferries and commuter trains on both sides of the Bay were halted, and mail, freight, and passenger service to all points was severed. But in spite of these inconveniences, residents of the Bay Area, like those in Sacramento, generally blamed the railroad for the disruption caused by the boycott.<sup>22</sup>

**M**uch of the support for the ARU came from the Bay Area's large and well-organized labor force. The strike was particularly popular among workers who disliked the powerful Southern Pacific and felt a common bond with the struggling ARU. The San Francisco Labor Council, the Workingmen's League, the local chapter of the Knights of Labor, and the Socialist Labor party all supported the strikers, and members of these groups often bolstered attendance at ARU meetings. The San Francisco press was also busy producing anti-Southern Pacific propaganda, offering almost unanimous support for the union effort.<sup>23</sup>

In Oakland, the mayor refused to order city police to move against the strikers, and many merchants supported the ARU in order to protest the Southern Pacific's control of the city waterfront. In other gestures of support, a ladies relief organization established a hospital for strikers, while a group of non-railroad workmen formed a "militia" company to aid the ARU.<sup>24</sup>

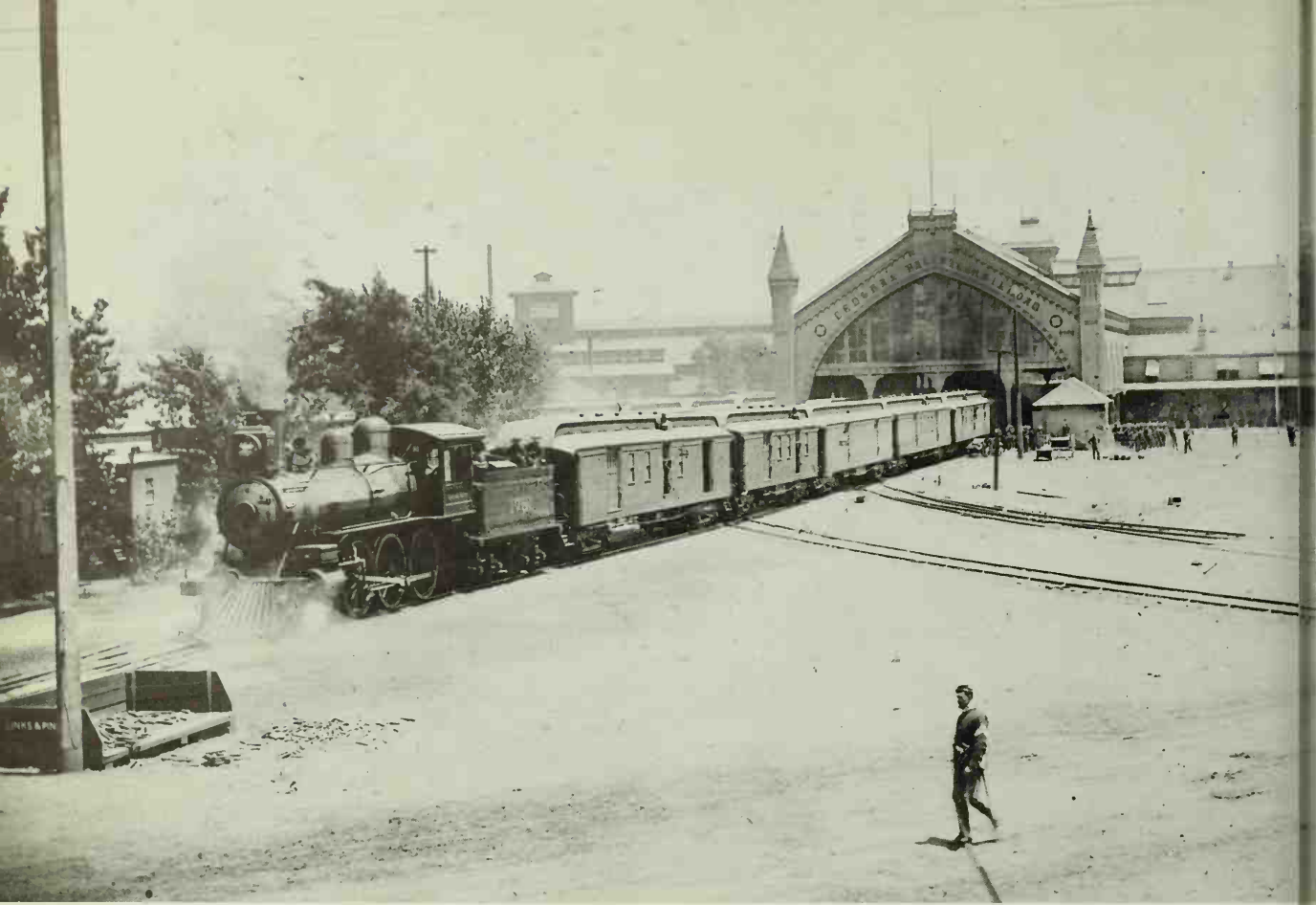
It was apparent from the beginning of the strike that its consequences in San Francisco-Oakland paled in comparison to its effects in Sacramento. Certainly the potential for serious violence existed, and tensions and tempers frequently flared, but the situation never reached

the proportions it did in the capital city. As the principal terminal of the Southern Pacific system, Sacramento was the natural focal point of ARU activities. In fact, by cutting transcontinental and northbound traffic at Sacramento, the rail line from Sacramento to Oakland became insignificant. Only after troops displaced strikers holding the station in Sacramento did the ARU attempt to consolidate its gains in San Francisco-Oakland, but its tardy efforts were too late.

By the time the limelight shifted to the Bay Area, the public had wearied of the lack of normal train and ferry service. An abundance of water transportation somewhat eased the problems of carrying on business, and antipathy toward the railroad held strong, but merchants and travelers around the Bay were anxious to restore rail operations after a month of inactivity. Although the ARU made an attempt to maintain control of the rail lines, it lost hope when other labor organizations discontinued their support activities. With the handwriting clearly on the wall, strikers in the Bay Area yielded Southern Pacific property amid a flurry of die-hard sabotage and angry recriminations which hurt their cause.

The ARU possessed neither the financial backing nor an established organization necessary to withstand a prolonged strike. While union officials had hoped for a quick victory in the controversy, each additional day worked to the railroad's advantage. With vigorous public support of the kind received in Sacramento, the ARU was able to operate in spite of union shortcomings. In the Bay Area, however, the ARU was only a small segment of the labor force, and strikers had no significant community ties to bolster their cause. Demoralized by union defeats, attempts to raise support for ARU efforts failed, and the boycott rapidly collapsed.

The least dramatic but most unique strike events in California occurred at Los Angeles. With a population of approximately 100,000 in 1894, Los Angeles was the only major city in the state to boast two transcontinental



railroads: the Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe. As in Sacramento, the mainstay of the region was agriculture, the city boasted little industry, and the regional economy was dependent on railroad service. More in common with the Bay Area, however, was the diversity of Los Angeles' labor force which was not dominated by railwaymen. The city's competing railway lines also removed it from the mercy of one rapacious company.<sup>25</sup>

Although the first California chapter of the ARU had been chartered in Los Angeles, it was immediately suppressed by the Southern Pacific and Santa Fe railroads. The ARU organization in Los Angeles was just rebuilding itself at the time the Pullman strike was called. Perhaps 1,500 to 2,000 Southern California employees of both railroads were active in the ARU during the boycott of Pullman cars, but their discipline and organization did not match that maintained in the Northern California chapters. Furthermore, there was less com-

elling reason to strike in Los Angeles because the depression of 1893 had not notably affected the area. In fact, when the ARU went out on strike in July, Los Angeles was in the midst of a prosperous recovery after the economic collapse of 1889-1890.<sup>26</sup>

While Angelenos had no love for the Southern Pacific, particularly for its attempt to monopolize harbor facilities, the existence of another railroad and the benefits resulting from railway competition were enthusiastically accepted. However, wild rumors and hysterical overreaction to the boycott resulted in flares of excitement.

Because both of Los Angeles' railroads were embroiled in the ARU strike, civic authorities believed serious violence might erupt. The Chamber of Commerce and many merchants feared the strike would jeopardize Los Angeles' economic recovery, and the *Los Angeles Times* fanned the fires of hysteria about anarchist conspiracy. When the US marshal for Southern California devel-



*The first train left Sacramento's Southern Pacific depot on July 11 after the national guard recaptured the station abandoned by ARU strikers.*

oped a serious illness and proved unable to discharge his duties, local officials demanded prompt action. In response, US Attorney General Olney prevailed upon President Cleveland to order troops into Southern California. On July 1, marching orders for federal soldiers were issued before overt violence or large demonstrations of any kind had occurred.<sup>27</sup>

Rumors about armed ARU resistance resulted in six infantry companies being dispatched to Los Angeles in heavily guarded troop trains. Arriving in warm and tranquil Los Angeles on July 4, the soldiers encountered a calm which prevailed for the remainder of the boycott, marred only by insignificant vandalism. Fears that 5,000 strikers had armed themselves to resist the army proved absolutely unfounded.<sup>28</sup> The notoriously anti-labor *Times* attributed this lack of serious trouble in Southern California to the unequivocal use of troops and to the wisdom of the local population.<sup>29</sup> While the troops may have had a moderating effect, it is more likely that the unprepared ARU organization and the anti-labor suspicions of the Los Angeles community kept the strike from reaching serious proportions.

Although the ARU received the support of the Los Angeles Council of Labor and other groups, it waged a fruitless battle in Southern California. Labor organizations in general were viewed with skepticism by many residents and certainly by the influential *Times* and other newspapers. During the boycott the *Los Angeles Evening Express* seriously implied that all ARU supporters were anarchists, while the *Times* labeled the strike open rebellion between capital and labor.<sup>30</sup> The anti-railroad sentiments which served to forge a bond with the ARU effort in Northern California were fearfully or contemptuously directed against the union in Los Angeles.

Once military forces had gained control in Sacramento and Los Angeles, troops were quickly placed at nearly all stations along the Central Pacific-Southern Pacific lines. By July 20, with military forces protecting railroad property throughout the state, ARU officials

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*Rumors about armed ARU resistance resulted in six infantry companies being dispatched to Los Angeles.*

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recognized defeat and instructed their men to return to work. The railroad quickly restored service, but troops were kept at their stations for another month in California, longer than in any other part of the United States.<sup>31</sup>

The Pullman strike was over, but its dramatic and often tragic events served to highlight the despair felt by many Californians in the nineties. Involving more than an isolated segment of society, the boycott raised fears and frustrating questions about the nation's social inequalities.

With railway brotherhood benefits limited to a select and highly skilled minority of craftsmen, the unskilled worker's motivation for ARU membership and support was clear. First, skilled railroad workers' wages reacted less to the downward trend caused by the depression of 1893 than those of unskilled workers who already lived close to the margin of subsistence and who were placed in jeopardy by the slightest reduction in wages or amount of work.<sup>32</sup> Second, the gulf between wages paid to the skilled brotherhood worker and the common laborer was cavernous. Although the Southern Pacific did not make wage cuts as drastic as other railroads during the depression, the wages of its skilled brotherhood employees were held constant while the unskilled laborers and trackmen faced importunate reductions. The Southern Pacific was also slow in meeting its payroll due to depression-induced stringencies, and it dismissed some employees to trim expenses.<sup>33</sup> All of these actions proved devastating to unskilled and unorganized workers and drove them to seek the protection of the ARU.

The ARU established itself and carried on its strike in urban areas with major concentrations of railroad labor. In Sacramento, where unskilled railway workers formed the majority of industrial wage earners, the organizational efforts of the ARU were particularly successful. Backed by considerable popular support in the state capital, the ARU developed a strong membership and prosecuted the Pullman strike with discipline and grim determination. In San Francisco-Oakland and Los Angeles, where railroad laborers did not exercise as significant a social influence, the effects of the Pullman strike were noticeably less dramatic. In the Bay Area, support from labor organizations and a sympathetic public contributed to the early successes of the ARU but faded as the strike progressed. The ARU floundered hopelessly in Los Angeles where labor unions were viewed with suspicion and the government acted swiftly against them.

Nevertheless, rancorous hostility toward the Southern Pacific was a strong ally of the ARU throughout the strike. Except in Los Angeles, the railroad was often considered a bigger threat than the ARU, or at least a more familiar enemy. The boycott intensified the almost traditional enmity Californians felt for the Southern Pacific and, in the examples of Sacramento and Oakland civic officials, often revealed surprising weaknesses in the railroad's local power and influence.<sup>34</sup> Even the national guard proved unreliable when first called to duty in Sacramento, and only federal officials, anxious about the national consequences of the Pullman disorder, gave the Southern Pacific the support it wanted and needed.

The impact of the 1894 Pullman strike in California was enormous. For the first time, cities resorted to using state and federal troops to maintain law and order.

Widespread violence killed seven persons and wounded scores of others. Railroad workers lost an estimated \$1,000,000 in wages during the heart of a depression, while the Southern Pacific lost approximately \$545,000 in net revenues.<sup>35</sup> The effects on state and urban economies and on business, farmers, and families were too great to be determined. Perhaps most importantly, repercussions of the boycott and other railroad controversies dominated state politics well into the twentieth century.

While public opinion during the boycott was influenced by many things—amounts of inconvenience and violence, for instance—the results of the 1894 state and local elections offered strong evidence of the nature of popular sentiment. The Populist party, made up largely of farmers who were especially at the mercy of railroad transportation, actively supported the ARU during the strike, expecting the railroad workers to vote the People's party ticket in 1894. Populists organized mass meetings, raised money, and further denounced Governor Markham for activating the national guard to suppress the strikers.<sup>36</sup>

The Populists gained their greatest ally when Adolph Sutro agreed to run for mayor of San Francisco on the Populist ticket which urged nationalization of the railroads. However, leaders of all the major parties advocated anti-monopoly platforms, and despite platform inconsistencies which the Populists readily pointed out, the impact of the Populist campaign was diminished. The emotional reaction created by the strike and other railroad issues nevertheless swept Sutro into office in the fall of 1894 and gave Populists sixty-two victories in county races.<sup>37</sup> Although many important positions were not captured by Populist candidates, an anti-railroad Democratic governor was elected, and there was not a single state or congressional race in which the Populist vote, added to the Democratic tally, would not have been victorious. In San Francisco, Alameda, and Sacramento counties, Populist and Democratic showings

*Spikes were removed from the rails in Yolo County, causing this train wreck.*



were particularly impressive. Even in Los Angeles, where Republicans held their greatest plurality, a combined Populist-Democratic vote would have won handily. In sum, the results of the elections of 1894 revealed the magnitude of anti-Southern Pacific sympathy, but the splitting of votes between Democrats and Populists resulted in victory for relatively few anti-railroad candidates. The railroad-supported Republican party, on the other hand, gained firm control of the state legislature.<sup>38</sup>

The year 1894 marked a turning point in the Southern Pacific's political policy. For many years prior, W. W. Stow, Collis P. Huntington's political

strategist, had shifted railroad support to whichever political party had the best chance of electoral success and offered the most accommodating relations with the railroad. Stow retired in late 1893, and just months prior to the Pullman strike William F. Herrin was chosen as his successor. Believing that Stow's approach would not work in the increasingly complex politics of the 1890's, Herrin opted to consolidate an unassailable base of power through control of one party. He created the political bureau as part of the Southern Pacific's Legal Department and attached the incredible financial resources and power of the Southern Pacific to the ascend-



*Armed troopers escorted trains down  
the lines after the opening of the  
Central Pacific line.*



ing dominance of the Republican party.<sup>39</sup> The success of his political operations was strikingly evident in the legislative control established in the election of 1894 and by the Republican dominance of state politics that lasted for the next forty years.

Within one month's time in 1894, a significant if obscure event in California's history unfolded. For most people the Pullman boycott was a costly experience, even a dismal failure. Perhaps the theory which suggests "power which is not legitimized tends to be either coercive or manipulative"<sup>40</sup> can account for the actions of both the Southern Pacific and the ARU during the Pullman conflict. Unable to exert social influence to match its economic power, the Southern Pacific sought, and won, government assistance in defeating the ARU and restoring operations. Furthermore, anti-railroad sympathies inflamed by the strike compelled the Southern Pacific to embark on a political strategy designed to solidify its position in future years, regardless of unfavorable public opinion.

Strikers were also forced to resort to coercive tactics in the pitched contest. Finding that their base of public support weakened as the inconvenient boycott wore on, ARU strikers chose violence and sabotage, or at least were unable to control it, and thereby jeopardized the union's tenuous ties with California's citizenry. After the strike collapsed, the ARU nearly disappeared, never again to play a role in railway union organization. While over 130 California union officials and strikers were arrested and subsequently blacklisted by the railroad, most strikers, if not strike leaders, eventually returned to their old jobs. In the end relations between the Southern Pacific and its employees returned largely to their pre-strike status.<sup>41</sup>

Although the ARU organization was mortally wounded, the leaders of the strike never publicly admitted defeat. Strike leaders had no hopes of regaining their former jobs, and local ARU chapters limped along in order to defend members who had been arrested. In

Los Angeles, six ARU members who were found guilty of interfering with the mails were sentenced to eighteen months in prison, but they were eventually pardoned by President Cleveland in 1896.<sup>42</sup> Of the nearly one hundred thirty strikers arrested in Northern California, two of the accused were arbitrarily selected for trial in San Francisco. The result of this lengthy trial was a hung jury, and they were released. The railroad's blacklist kept these strikers from gaining employment until 1896, when the state labor commissioner intervened with the railroad and the US attorney general to have both the charges and the blacklist dropped.<sup>43</sup>

The Pullman boycott, which began as a dispute of factory workers in Illinois, found its most fervent followers in the Golden State. In California railroad workers carried on the strike after it was ended elsewhere in the nation, and even after the Pullman workers had returned to their jobs. When Debs called a superfluous convention to end the strike in August, 1894, he was only able to muster fifty-three delegates, nearly all of whom were from California and other western states.<sup>44</sup> If the Pullman boycott was a crusade for the rights of unskilled workers, strikers had to be satisfied with minor Populist party victories in the voting booth. If it was a civil war between anarchists and upstanding citizens, the railroad and the government won by crushing the ARU. The basic causes of the workers' discontent—exploitation, poverty, and lack of effective organization and representation—were not resolved. These questions of social justice would await other remedies, just as Hiram Johnson and a reform government would later confront the lingering domination of the Southern Pacific railroad in California.

The photos on pages 21 and 34 are courtesy the Southern Pacific Company. Those on pages 26, 30, and 33 are courtesy the California Department of Parks and Recreation. The engraving on page 22 is from Charles Nordhoff's *California: A Book for Travellers and Settlers* (1872). The photo on page 28 is reproduced from *The "City Guard": A History of Company "B"* (1895). The photo on page 25 is from the CHS Library.

## Notes

1. The mood of fear that was engendered by socialist and anarchist movements at this time has been, perhaps, best examined by Barbara Tuchman in *The Proud Tower* (New York: Bantam Books, 1967), pp. 109-110, 494-496.
2. Harold U. Faulkner, *American Economic History* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publications, 1954), p. 520; US Interstate Commerce Commission, *Eighth Annual Report for the Year Ending December 1, 1894* (Washington, D.C., 1894), pp. 68-69.
3. Readers are directed to the US Congress, Senate, *United States Strike Commission Report*, Sen. Doc. 7, 53 Cong. 3 sess. (1895), for details of the situation at the Pullman factory.
4. Almont Lindsey, *The Pullman Strike: the Story of a Unique Experiment and of a Great Labor Uproar* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 110-2; Donald L. McMurry, "Labor Policies of the General Managers Association of Chicago, 1886-1894," *Journal of Economic History*, 11 (1953): 174.
5. Harvey S. Perloff, et al., *Regions, Resources, and Economic Growth* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1960), pp. 168, 182-183.
6. *Ibid.*, 128; David B. Griffiths, "Anti-Monopoly Movement in California, 1873-1898," *Southern California Quarterly*, 52 (June, 1970): 97.
7. Grace H. Stimson, *The Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1955), pp. 161-163 (hereinafter referred to as *Labor in Los Angeles*); California Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Seventh Biennial Report, 1895-6* (Sacramento, 1896), p. 148; Gerald G. Eggert, *Railroad Labor Disputes: The Beginnings of Federal Strike Policy* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1967), p. 6 (hereinafter referred to as *Railroad Labor Disputes*); Ira B. Cross, *A History of the Labor Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1935), p. 219 (hereinafter referred to as *Labor Movement in California*).
8. Eggert, *Railroad Labor Disputes*, 157.
9. Stimson, *Labor in Los Angeles*, 164-165; California Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Seventh Biennial Report, 1895-6*, pp. 141-142.
10. A complete narrative record of the strike may be found in William W. Ray, "The Great Strike of 1894: The Pullman Boycott in California" (unpublished MA thesis, California State University, Hayward, 1972).
11. Walton Bean, *California: An Interpretive History* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1968), p. 251; *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, May 3, 1894, p. 2, and May 18, 1894, p. 1.
12. Joseph A. McGowan, *History of the Sacramento Valley*, I (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1961): 244; Myrtle S. Lord, *A Sacramento Saga: Fifty Years of Achievement—Chamber of Commerce Leadership* (Sacramento: Sacramento Chamber of Commerce, 1946), p. 7.
13. US War Department, *Annual Report for the Secretary of War for the Year 1894* (Washington, D.C., 1894), p. 112 (hereinafter referred to as *Annual Report, 1894*); McGowan, *History of the Sacramento Valley*, II: 100; *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, July 1, 1894, p. 1.
14. US Congress, House, *Report of the Postmaster General*, Exec. Doc. #1, Part 4, 53 Cong., 30 sess. (Washington, D.C., 1895), pp. 396-399; US Department of Justice, *Appendix to the Annual Report of the Attorney General of the United States for the Year 1896* (Washington, D.C., 1896), p. 17 (hereinafter referred to as *Appendix*). Eggert, *Railroad Labor Disputes*, examines at length the legal reasoning which led to the widespread use of injunctions and vigorous federal involvement in the Pullman strike.
15. *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, July 2, 1894, p. 3, and July 4, 1894, pp. 1, 3; Filmer, et al, *The "City Guard": A History of Company "B" First Regiment Infantry, N.G.C. During the Sacramento Campaign, July 3 to 26, 1894*, pp. 15-16 (hereinafter referred to as *City Guard*). For a fascinating record of Governor Markham's activities and thoughts during the strike, the reader is referred to the Huntington Library, Henry Markham Collection, Box XX, Ninety-Six Telegrams Relating to the Strike of 1894.
16. Filmer, et al, *City Guard*, 16, 26, 34-35, 64, 92; *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, July 4, 1894, p. 1, and July 5, 1894, pp. 3-4; US Department of Justice, *Appendix*, pp. 25-26. The *Sacramento Daily Record-Union* estimated the crowd, excluding strikers and military, to number approximately 5,000.
17. US War Department, *Annual Report, 1894*, pp. 111-112; *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, July 11, 1894, pp. 2-3.
18. Filmer, et al, *City Guard*, 77-78, 90-91; Samuel Yellen, *American Labor Struggles* (New York: S. A. Russell, 1956), p. 122; *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, July 10, 1894, p. 1.
19. US War Department, *Annual Report, 1894*, pp. 112-113; US Department of Justice, *Appendix*, p. 22.
20. US War Department, *Annual Report, 1894*, pp. 113-114; Yellen, *American Labor Struggles*, 131; *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, July 17, 1894, p. 1.
21. *Oakland Enquirer*, June 29, 1894, p. 2; *San Francisco Examiner*, June 28, 1894, p. 6; Eggert, *Railroad Labor Disputes*, 176; US Department of Justice, *Appendix*, 29, 33.
22. *Oakland Enquirer*, July 5, 1894, p. 5 and July 29, 1894, p. 1; Frank A. Leach, *Recollections of a Newspaperman* (San Francisco: Samuel Levinson, 1917), p. 267; US Department of Justice, *Appendix*, 25-26.
23. Robert E. L. Knight, *Industrial Relations in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1900-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), p. 33 (hereinafter referred to as *Industrial Relations*); *Oakland Enquirer*, June 30, 1894, p. 8, and July 1, 1894, p. 1; US War Department, *Annual Report, 1894*, 114.
24. Leach, *Recollections of a Newspaperman*, 271; *Oakland Enquirer*, July 13, 1894, p. 1, Extra Edition; Griffiths, "Anti-Monopoly Movement in California, 1873-1898," p. 103.



25. Robert M. Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles 1850-1930* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 67, 121 (hereinafter referred to as *Fragmented Metropolis*); Glenn S. Dumke, *The Boom of the Eighties* (San Marino: Huntington Library Publications, 1944), p. 270; Charles D. Willard, *A History of the Chamber of Commerce of Los Angeles, California from its Foundation, September, 1888, to the Year 1900* (Los Angeles: Kingsley-Barnes and Neumer Co., 1899), p. 96 (hereinafter referred to as *Chamber of Commerce of Los Angeles*).
26. Willard, *Chamber of Commerce of Los Angeles*, 153-154; Fogelson, *Fragmented Metropolis*, 79.
27. US War Department, *Annual Report*, 1894, p. 111; US Department of Justice, *Appendix*, 19-20; Cross, *Labor Movement in California*, 277.
28. US War Department, *Annual Report*, 1894, pp. 111, 115; US Department of Justice, *Appendix*, 22-23.
29. *Los Angeles Times*, July 23, 1894, p. 1.
30. Stimson, *Labor in Los Angeles*, pp. 161, 167; "Southern California and the Strike," *Land of Sunshine*, 1 (August, 1894): 59; *Los Angeles Evening Express*, July 5, 1894, p. 4; *Los Angeles Times*, June 29, 1894, p. 4 and June 30, 1894, p. 4.
31. US War Department, *Annual Report*, 1894, p. 116.
32. Whitney Coombs, *The Wages of Unskilled Labor in Manufacturing Industries in the United States, 1890-1924* (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1968), p. 13; Carl C. Plehn, "Labor in California," *Yale Review*, 4 (February, 1896): 417; US Congress, Senate, *United States Strike Commission Report*, Senate Doc. 7, 53 Cong., 3 sess. (Washington, D.C., 1895), pp. 132-135.
33. Stimson, *Labor in Los Angeles*, 165; Plehn, "Labor in California," 416.
34. Griffiths, "Anti-Monopoly Movement in California, 1873-1898," 93, 102; Knight, *Industrial Relations*, 33; "The Situation in California," *Nation*, July 12, 1894, p. 23.
35. California Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Seventh Biennial Report*, 1895-6, p. 149; Cross, *Labor Movement in California*, 220.
36. Griffiths, "Anti-Monopoly Movement in California, 1873-1898," pp. 102-104; Stimson, *Labor in Los Angeles*, 171; Alexander Saxton, "San Francisco Labor and the Populist and Progressive Insurgencies," *Pacific Historical Review*, 34 (1967): 425 (hereinafter "San Francisco Labor"); *San Francisco Voice of Labor*, March 23, 1895, p. 1; Donald E. Walter, "The Period of the Populist Party," in Royce D. Delmatier, et al., eds., *The Rumble of California Politics* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1970), p. 112 (hereinafter referred to as "Period of the Populist Party"); Michael P. Rogin and John L. Shover, *Political Change in California: Critical Elections and Social Movements, 1890-1966* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing Corp., 1969), p. 17 (hereinafter referred to as *Political Change in California*).
37. Griffiths, "Anti-Monopoly Movement in California, 1873-1898," pp. 105, 107; Walters, "Period of the Populist Party," 113, 144, 116.
38. Rogin and Shover, *Political Change in California*, 18; California, Secretary of State, *California Blue Book or State Roster 1895* (Sacramento, 1895), pp. 150, 163, 254, 274; W. H. Hutchinson, "Southern Pacific—Myth or Reality," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, 48 (December, 1969): 331.
39. Hutchinson, "Southern Pacific—Myth or Reality," 330-332; Saxton, "San Francisco Labor," 422.
40. Herbert Gutman, "Class, Status, and Community Power in Nineteenth Century American Industrial Cities—Paterson, New Jersey: A Case Study," in Frederic C. Jaher, ed., *The Age of Industrialism in America: Essays in Social Structure and Cultural Values* (New York: The Free Press, 1968), p. 279.
41. Cross, *Labor Movement in California*, 220; California Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Seventh Biennial Report*, 150.
42. *San Francisco Voice of Labor*, January 16, 1895, p. 7; Stimson, *Labor in Los Angeles*, 170.
43. Cross, *Labor Movement in California*, 220; California Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Seventh Biennial Report*, 151-2.
44. Yellen, *American Labor Struggles*, 133.

Francis  
of  
the flowers  
  
an appreciation of  
John Francis  
Saunders

Charles Francis Saunders dedicated *Under the Sky in California* "to the tenderfoot whom California loves to educate." For some thirty years after his own tenderfoot days in 1902, the year he arrived in California and went botanizing in the little desert community of Palm Springs, Saunders was himself the most delightful of educators. His books on California and the Southwest, written in a pleasant conversational style, are an admirable introduction to the Pueblo Indians, the California Missions, and the flora of the West.

Saunders was born to Quaker parents in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, on July 12, 1859, and educated in Friends' schools. As one writer points out, his books are permeated with the Quaker spirit. They "manifest the qualities that are fundamentally Friendly: a calm, quiet strength, integrity, tolerance, moderation and cheerful kindness and simplicity, the love of nature and of healing silences, and a simple impregnable faith."<sup>1</sup>

From his earliest years Saunders wanted to be an author. By the time he was thirteen he had written "a tragedy in five acts . . . and a satire entitled 'New Jersey' in the meter of Hiawatha."<sup>2</sup> After graduating from high school he began work as a junior clerk for Peter Wright and Sons, a Philadelphia shipping firm with which he was associated for twenty-five years. Evenings he tried writing fiction but found it hard to imagine plots, so he turned to essays and descriptive articles. On lunch hours and on Saturdays after work, he explored the city and wrote accounts of passing landmarks—old brick houses being used commercially, churches being scaffolded, decaying taverns offering old-world flavor.

In 1888 Saunders formed a walking club with two of his friends, Henry Troth, a photographer, and Elisabeth

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Hallowell, a talented artist who had studied with Howard Pyle. Over the next two years the friends made numerous excursions to picturesque old inns near Philadelphia, and they collaborated on a manuscript "Inns and Outs," written by Saunders and illustrated by the other two members of The Triangle.

Among the three friends, Elisabeth Hallowell was known as the Botanist because of "a rare ability to recognize a blackberry bush at forty yards."<sup>3</sup> Saunders had never shown any interest in botany, he once told a reporter, beyond choosing a flower for his buttonhole. When he was about thirty-two, however, he heard a lecture which changed the direction of his life. Many years later he expressed his appreciation to the lecturer, the noted botanist Joseph T. Rothrock of the University of Pennsylvania:

One night in Philadelphia—I forget the year, but it may have been 1891—I dropped in at one of your University Extension Course lectures on botany, and though I had until then had only the most passing interest in plants, my fancy was so caught by your engaging presentation of the subject that I attended the rest of the course, and a subsequent one designed to familiarize your class with the use of a manual of botany. Thus I was provided with a key to the intelligent use of the plant world, and the pursuit of botany has ever since been one of my keenest pleasures.<sup>4</sup>

Inspired by Rothrock's lectures, Saunders spent many holidays botanizing. He made walking trips through the countryside from the Green Mountains of Vermont to the Appalachians in North Carolina. "At night," he told a friend, "I would put up at farm houses and mountain cabins, and was an enigma to the people. The only reason for a being of my sort to exist was that I must be an herb doctor!"<sup>5</sup>

He always carried a few pencil stubs in his pocket and a little book for the notes he jotted down in his small, neat handwriting. With good Quaker thrift, he wrote in old deposit books, address books, and date books or on bits of paper held together with a straight pin. The familiar caught his attention as well as the unusual. An



*Charles Francis Saunders slicing the fruit of an Opuntia he started from the remnant of an old hedge at Mission San Gabriel.*



With the first frosts comes the vanguard of winter tourists to Southern California; and the streets of a dozen little cities that make a bid for tourist trade arouse themselves as a drought-stricken country-side brightens up after rain. Shops deserted during the long, dry days of summer now run up their shades and blossom out into all sorts of allurements for the tourists' patronage. There are, for instance, windows full of California and Mexican gems—tourmalines, opals, moonstones, turquoises, and sardonyx; and beside them are trays of Navajo silver bracelets, buckles and rings, and abalone brooches, cuff-buttons, paper cutters and what not, in all colors of the sunset and more. Navajo blankets blaze in doorways and Indian baskets in designs both aboriginal and sophisticated, catch the eye at every turn. The bidders for the cheaper trade sort over their last season's tarantulas and scorpions, mounting them on clean pasteboards, and dust off their left over trap-door spider's nests and horned toads. In the book stores, Mission photographs are put nearer the door, and "Ramona"—perennial best seller in Southern California—is stacked up on the counter; while every art-shop with its picture of golden poppies and scarlet pepperberries, fuzzy eucalyptus blossoms and fiery poinsettias, becomes a sort of Hesperian *hortus siccus*. Chinese and Japanese shops spring up over night with their punky smell of the Orient, their alluring dress-goods and potteries and carvings, their devils and dragons and bald-headed old men in bric-à-brac, and their exquisite teacups and squat teapots, world without end. The streets thicken daily with automobiles until well after New Year's, and the old residenter who knows most of the permanent population by heart, finds rare entertainment in the new faces that each day brings. Pretty girls in the latest Eastern thing in hats; elderly ladies of comfortable embonpoint, with lorgnettes and lapdogs; stout old gentlemen clean-shaven and florid, with Scotch bottoms to their shoes, bespeaking a solid footing in bank directorates; nervous, dyspeptic-looking "Big Business" presidents grudgingly taking a little relaxation by the doctor's orders; young bloods, without hats and in white flannels, talking golf, polo and motor-cars—every day you see these types and many another, taking the air and enjoying the sun from November till the lambs of March are skipping again in Eastern fields, when they begin to vanish away.

from *Under the Sky in California* (1913)

early notebook, dated 1898, has a charming account of the common grasses and the observation, "We lose much pleasure by failing to pay more attention than we do to the smaller sorts of flowers. The flies and spiders are wiser . . . than we."<sup>6</sup>

For several years Saunders wrote about his country walks in a column for the *Philadelphia Record*. He contributed to many botanical journals which published articles of popular appeal. He also wrote verse which appeared in several magazines, and from 1894 to 1897 he edited and published *The United Friend*, a journal he founded in hopes of bringing together various factions of Quakerism.

In 1902 Saunders married Elisabeth Moore Hallowell, the artist-botanist of "Inns and Outs." Taking leave of absence from work, he traveled with his wife to California in hopes that the climate would benefit her fragile health. One of the first places they visited was the little desert outpost of Palm Springs where they discovered the pleasures of camping in the desert. Saunders studied plant life in the nearby canyons, traveling with a horse and buggy he rented for two dollars a day. For a naturalist familiar only with eastern flora, the desert was a revelation. In the words of his Palm Springs friend, the artist Carl Eytel, it must have been "*one* grand Fiesta, a kind of wild flower intoxication without the effects of bootlegging or headache."<sup>7</sup>

Delighted by "mountain, desert, cañon and flowery plain,"<sup>8</sup> Francis and Elisabeth Saunders decided to make their home in Southern California, but they returned East for a brief period, and from 1903 to 1905 Saunders was secretary of the Philadelphia Commercial Exchange. In 1906 he and his wife settled in Pasadena, moving to the California bungalow at 580 North Lake Avenue where he lived for thirty-five years and where he wrote the many articles and books which brought him fame as a sensitive observer of California and the Southwest.

Saunders's first book, published in 1904, was a volume of verse, *In a Poppy Garden*, dedicated to his wife and



Supersensitive souls have told us more than once that they can stand most mixtures in California's land-scaping adventures until it comes to Palms; these, they say, with a shudder, these are the unpardonable sin. Nevertheless, a campaign in the Golden State to prohibit advertising would have about as much chance of success as one to forbid a Californian's adorning his fifty-foot lawn with a couple of Canary Island Date Palms. Lolling in his shirt sleeves beneath those generous fronds, he is dead sure he is in Los Angeles, not Oshkosh, and that is what he wants to be certain of.

from *Trees and Shrubs of California Gardens* (1926)

*Saunders in 1902 with the horse and buggy he rented from Dr. Wellwood Murray for botanical excursions to Andreas, Palm, and Chino canyons.*

My neighbor the Professor is on more intimate terms with the plants of his garden than any other amateur I know.

"Why," says he, in one of those enthusiastic outbursts that particularly endear him to his friends, "I should consider it disgraceful business to be living cheek by jowl with this fascinating company of the Lord's creations that gladden me hourly with their gifts of beauty and fragrance, and yet know less about them than the unlettered birds do who nest in their twigs and harvest their seeds. If I am to take a plant into my family I want to be able to call it by name and know everything obtainable concerning it, past and present. Then I can look it in the face, as one creature of the Lord to another."

from *Trees and Shrubs of California Gardens* (1926)



## TREES AND SHRUBS OF CALIFORNIA GARDENS



CHARLES FRANCIS SAUNDERS

*Eucalyptus flowers decorate the binding  
of one of Saunder's books.*

illustrated by her. The following year he wrote the descriptive text for *California Wild Flowers*, an attractive little portfolio with twelve of his wife's watercolor sketches. Elisabeth Saunders died in 1910, and Saunders dedicated his next book to her memory. *A Window in Arcady* (1911), compiled from nature articles in the *Philadelphia Record* and *The Churclman*, describes the quiet countryside which he and his wife had enjoyed on the East Coast. The book marked a turning point in his career. From then on, California and the Southwest inspired his writing.

Indian ethnologist Frederick Webb Hodge praised Saunders's first book on the West, *The Indians of the Terraced Houses* (1912), for its sympathetic description of the Pueblo culture. Saunders was indignant that the federal government would preserve the ancient cliff dwellings and at the same time promote educational policies that helped extinguish Pueblo culture. In a notebook kept during his extensive tour of the pueblos in 1909, he suggested that the Pueblo Indians be allowed to develop "along the lines which they themselves have started and wonderfully continued till Washington discovered them."<sup>9</sup> One of the Indians with whom he corresponded sent Saunders his best rabbit stick as a gift "because you are a good man."<sup>10</sup>

In 1913 Saunders published *Under the Sky in California*, based on his excursions from Monterey to Palm Canyon and across to "unexplored Catalina."<sup>11</sup> Copies of the book were given as premiums to *Sunset* magazine subscribers, and it remained in print for a quarter of a century. The artist Eytel was charmed by the chapter on the Colorado Desert and wrote, "You are a benefactor to California and especially to Palm Springs which you have honored by a very fine description of its charms. . . . I like the true and clear way of your book. . . . I believe it will help to establish again the romantic travel a foot or a wagon instead of by automobil."<sup>12</sup> By 1926 Saunders was lamenting the invasion of the motor car, but he wrote, "The 'real California' still lives, and some-



Artist Elisabeth Hallowell Saunders,  
first wife of Charles Francis Saunders, at  
their Pasadena home around 1906.



times you find her just under the barbed wire fence that shuts out the hurrying highway.”<sup>13</sup>

Saunders wrote two other popular guides, *Finding the Worth While in California* (1916) and *Finding the Worth While in the Southwest* (1918). The first book describes an institution still newsworthy in 1916, “a peculiar style of restaurant known as the cafeteria (properly pronounced *cafetareća*), in which all dishes are displayed before the eye and one is one’s own waiter. . . . You pay for each individual item and for half a dollar you may have the best in the land.”<sup>14</sup>

It was in *The Southern Sierras of California* (1923) that Saunders achieved a timeless book on the California landscape. In it he united his love of the mountains, of native plants, and of the history associated with both. As he said in his preface, it is a “kindly, human quality rather than scientific facts about rocks and glacial evidences” that he wishes to convey. Like John Muir he preferred a saunter to a hike, and he takes the reader on unhurried walks through the foothills and mountains of Southern California. He is the best of companions—an enthusiast with a wealth of knowledge, a wry sense of humor, and a relaxed conversational style. He laughs at himself as a “sentimental herborizer”<sup>15</sup> but he is also, as he describes C. C. Parry, “one of the most genial and lovable of naturalists.”<sup>16</sup>

Saunders wrote seven books about trees, shrubs, and wildflowers. His *Useful Wild Plants of the United States and Canada*, originally published in 1920, was reissued as a paperback in 1976 for a new generation interested in living off the land. The Huntington Library, San Marino, has a copy of the original edition inscribed by the author, “To you, dear Miss Culin, who have been the means of affording so many of us such pleasant adventures among the wild plants.” This was Mira Barrett Culin, the M.B.C. to whom *The Southern Sierras of California* was dedicated. The couple shared many interests, including a love of gardening—it was at the Pasadena Garden Club that they first met—and they were

An advertisement for Bullock's  
department store from the Los Angeles  
Evening Express, March 30, 1927.

# The FLOWERS of CALIFORNIA

by Charles Francis Saunders

AUTHOR OF "WITH the FLOWERS and TREES of CALIFORNIA"

Every month in the year wild flowers are blooming in California somewhere, though not everywhere. Hard upon the first liberal rains of autumn, the wild currant unfolds its lovely pink racemes in warm canyon mouths, and on southward-facing hills the crimson eardrops of the fuchsia-flowered gooseberry sparkle like points of fire amid the freshening green of the chaparral. To speak of winter in the Southern California valleys is a concession to the almanac. What we call winter is really spring's vanguard, now and then halted, to be sure, but only to advance again. No lover of Flora can afford to miss frequent trips afield during the winter months. Even in mid-December there will normally be bright days of hot sunshine when the poppies open wide their cups of gold, and in damp pockets of the woods we are thrilled by the delicate fragrance of the dentaria's rosy white blossoms, the "milkmaids" of children's speech. Then, too, and in January, the manzanita decks its ruddy branches with urn-shaped flowers of purest white, while upon many a hillside the sheeted bloom of the earliest wild lilac lies like a light snowfall.

Granted a normal rainfall, February sees wea upon its way the floral pageant which culminates, so far as the valley and mesa country is concerned, in March, April and May. Then is the choicest floral spoil of the year. Blue brodiaeas and mariposa tulips of indescribable beauty nod among the tall wild grasses; brown and yellow pansies, sun cups, popcorn flowers, cream cups, penstemons, and those most endearing of California flowers, the nemophilas or "baby-blue-eyes," enliven the wayside. Certain species of particularly sociable habit make solid sheets and ribbons of color, acre on acre, that attract the eye from afar. There are lupines in blue and purple, the mountain lilacs' azure masses, clarkias, godetias and owl's-clover in rose and magenta, gillias pink and red, orange-yellow poppies, and monkey-flowers in buff, cream and mahogany.

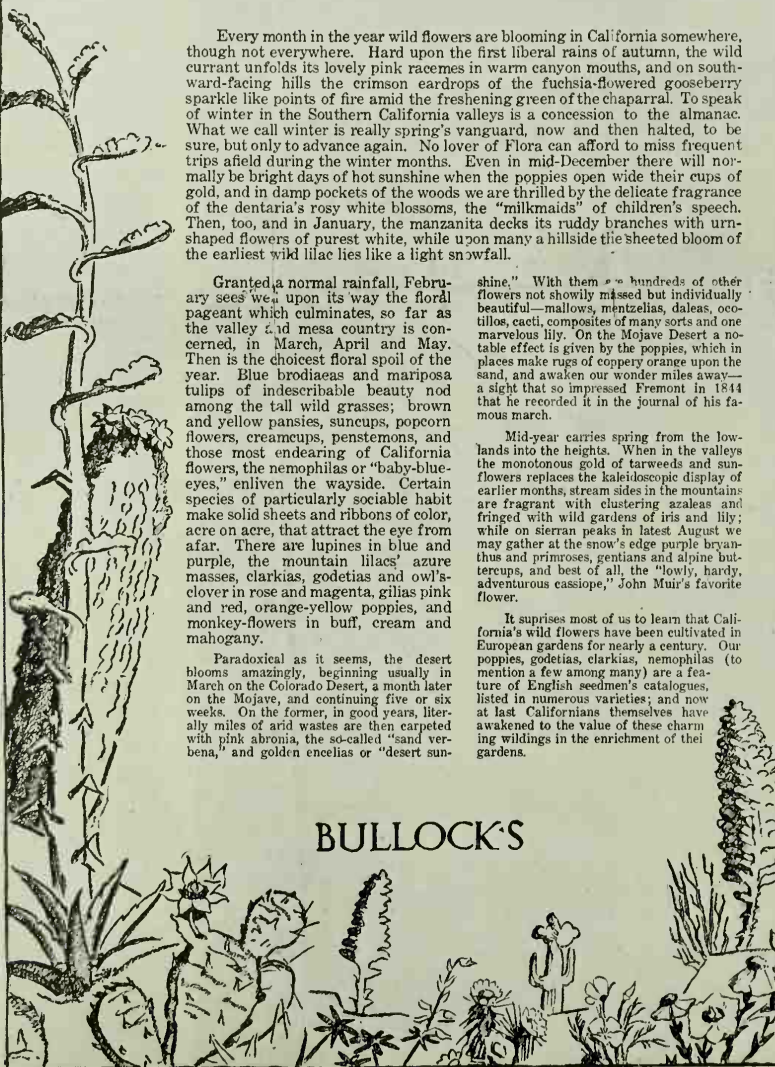
Paradoxical as it seems, the desert blooms amazingly, beginning usually in March on the Colorado Desert, a month later on the Mojave, and continuing five or six weeks. On the former, in good years, literally miles of arid wastes are then carpeted with pink abronia, the so-called "sand ver-bena," and golden encelias or "desert sun-

shine." With them are hundreds of other flowers not showily missed but individually beautiful—mallows, mentzelias, daleas, ocotillos, cacti, composites of many sorts and one marvelous lily. On the Mojave Desert a notable effect is given by the poppies, which in places make rugs of coppery orange upon the sand, and awaken our wonder miles away—a sight that so impressed Fremont in 1844 that he recorded it in the journal of his famous march.

Mid-year carries spring from the lowlands into the heights. When in the valleys the monotonous gold of tarweeds and sunflowers replaces the kaleidoscopic display of earlier months, stream sides in the mountains are fragrant with clustering azaleas and fringed with wild gardens of iris and lily; while on sierran peaks in latest August we may gather at the snow's edge purple bryanthus and primroses, gentians and alpine buttercups, and best of all, the "lowly, hardy, adventurous cassiope," John Muir's favorite flower.

It surprises most of us to learn that California's wild flowers have been cultivated in European gardens for nearly a century. Our poppies, godetias, clarkias, nemophilas (to mention a few among many) are a feature of English seedmen's catalogues, listed in numerous varieties; and now at last Californians themselves have awakened to the value of these charming wildings in the enrichment of their gardens.

BULLOCK'S



married in 1921. Saunders often acknowledged his wife's inspiration. In particular, she persuaded him to write *The Story of Carmelita* (1928) about the Pasadena groves and gardens of Jeanne Carr, the woman Saunders calls "a sort of mother in literature"<sup>17</sup> to John Muir.

One of the most practical of Saunders's books, *The Wild Gardens of Old California* (1927), sought literally to sow the word and plant the seed. Each book had a compartment at the back which contained six packets of California wildflower seeds.

Saunders's other plant books are *With the Flowers and Trees in California* (1914), *The Western Flower Guide* (1917), *Trees and Shrubs of California Gardens* (1926), and *Western Wild Flowers and Their Stories* (1933). Chapter XIV of the 1926 book has an engaging description of the Professor, a recurring character who in this instance resembles Saunders himself.

Mira Saunders said her husband felt "his position as an author was a peculiar one, that he had no standing with scientists because he put the science of botany into writings for the 'man in the street' and that he had no standing with literary men because he introduced scientific terms into literature."<sup>18</sup> His books may seem casual, but they are based on sound research. He gathered his information in the field and from old records and journals as well as from standard scientific works, and he exchanged data with botanists, ethnobotanists, gardeners, and other plant enthusiasts. His prose is clear, direct, and sprightly, directed to those who love plants "for their esthetic graces and human associations rather than for their anatomical makeup and workings."<sup>19</sup>

Saunders took special pleasure in making his own garden "a garden of association, the romance and flavor of early California coming into it with its plants which were so often provided . . . from slips, seeds, and roots from places of historic and romantic interest."<sup>20</sup> Several plants were mementos of the missions. The tamarisk grew from a slip cut at the abandoned Mission San Antonio de Padua, the nopal from the remnants of a

hedge at Mission San Gabriel, and the white oleander from a bush at Mission San Juan Capistrano. When the mission at Capistrano was restored, new oleanders were started there from the plant in Saunders's garden.

From the time of his first trip to California, Saunders had been interested in the missions. He felt an affinity for the old Franciscan padres and thought them rather Quakerly in their emphasis on peaceful progress. He visited and photographed all the missions, going by foot or by stage as much as possible and avoiding the "impatient automobile."<sup>21</sup> (He never learned to drive; his wife Mira was the family chauffeur.)

In his books on the missions, Saunders is a perceptive guide. He is a good observer with a lively sense of history and an appreciation of the Franciscan spirit, but he is never overwhelmed by the romance of the past or what he calls "pious enthusiasm."<sup>22</sup> He and his friend J. Smeaton Chase collaborated on *The California Padres and Their Missions* (1915), Saunders writing the descriptive and historical portions of each chapter, and Chase the fictional episodes. Saunders also wrote *A Little Book of California Missions*, issued in an attractive edition in 1925 and revised and enlarged in 1939.

In *Capistrano Nights* (1930), which he wrote with Father St. John O'Sullivan, Saunders brings together stories, legends, reminiscences, and folk-sayings. They were all told to Father O'Sullivan by his Spanish-speaking parishioners. Saunders translated the material and gave it a title and format suggested by his wife. (He had first learned Spanish as a schoolboy because of his interest in Don Quixote.) The authors were delighted with their book, but it was not a commercial success. In a year or so they bought up all the unsold copies, disposing of as many of them as possible through a Pasadena bookstore and the little shop at the mission.

Saunders was at work on yet another book at the time of his death on May 1, 1941. One of the last things he did that day was identify some plant specimens for a neighbor.



*Of the Golden State's Floral Emblem; How the World Learned about It; and Somewhat of Other Pacific Coast Poppies.*

Once upon a time—and it is not so long ago, either, for there are eyewitnesses to the fact living today—the attention of the traveler by sea along the southern California coast in late winter or early spring would be attracted by a remarkable spectacle. For mile upon mile the dimpled foothills of the Coast Range and its seaward stretching mesas would glow as if on fire from the limitless fields of copper-hued poppies; open mouthed to the sun. Tradition has it that in Spanish days sailors on the ships off the coast had their imaginations so stirred by the phenomenon that they nicknamed this country, as they had long before dubbed another bit of America—*La Tierra del Fuego*, the Land of Fire. Others, they say, called this flowery carpet *La Sabanilla de San Pasqual*, that is, the Altar-cloth of St. Pascal, that pious shepherd lad of Old Spain, who, tending his flocks in the open fields remote from church or priest, would kneel among the wild flowers and be rapt of the Spirit into heavenly communion.

How much of fiction and what of truth these old tales embody it is not for me to say; but the fact is beyond dispute that when California was incorporated into the United States, San Pasqual's name was found identified with a rancho whose three square leagues, *poco más ó menos*, as the old deeds ran, spread fair about the Sierra Madre's skirts. Out of it and its poppy fields fifty-odd years ago the land upon which the city of Pasadena now stands was taken; and many another tract as well; so that now our California poppy would be little more than a tale that was told over much of that old rancho's area, were it not for the gardens that harbor the flower's domesticated descendants.

from *Western Wild Flowers and Their Stories* (1933)

Mira Saunders lived until 1968. A woman of spirit and deep convictions, she worked actively for women's rights, for Indian rights, and for peace. During the war, Doubleday asked permission to melt the plates of *Western Wild Flowers and Their Stories* for scrap. She wrote back, "As my husband believed that war was an anachronism, and that religion, knowledge of other instruments, and intelligence were available to prevent it, for me to give this permission you ask is exceedingly difficult."<sup>23</sup> Eventually she bought the plates of all her husband's books except *Trees and Shrubs of California Gardens*. She felt his work deserved to be kept in print and always hoped it could be republished.

For many years Mira Saunders wrote about plants for the *Pasadena Star-News*, illustrating her articles with her own photographs. At the age of ninety she published an article in *The Herbarist* on the Rose of Castile, one of the flowers she and her husband loved best.

Mira Saunders gave collections to three West Coast institutions to help preserve her husband's memory. His magnificent collection of Indian baskets, pottery, and other artifacts is in the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles. His valuable botanic library forms the nucleus of the reference library at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden. His letters and personal copies of his books are at the Huntington Library, San Marino, along with Mira Saunders's articles and letters.

It is pleasant to know that a variety of pelargonium was named for Mira Saunders. Her husband's name is joined with John C. Frémont's in *Dalea Fremontii* var. *Saundersii*, an indigo bush Saunders discovered in the Mojave Desert in 1903. As he wrote when discussing the Fremontia, "To have one's name linked to a plant in Nature's wild garden is to be inducted into a choice hierarchy—and to be insured a fame of rare sweetness and of rare endurance, too."<sup>24</sup>

All photographs are courtesy of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.



Saunders with his second wife, Mira Culin, author of many articles on the flowers and trees of Pasadena.

## Notes

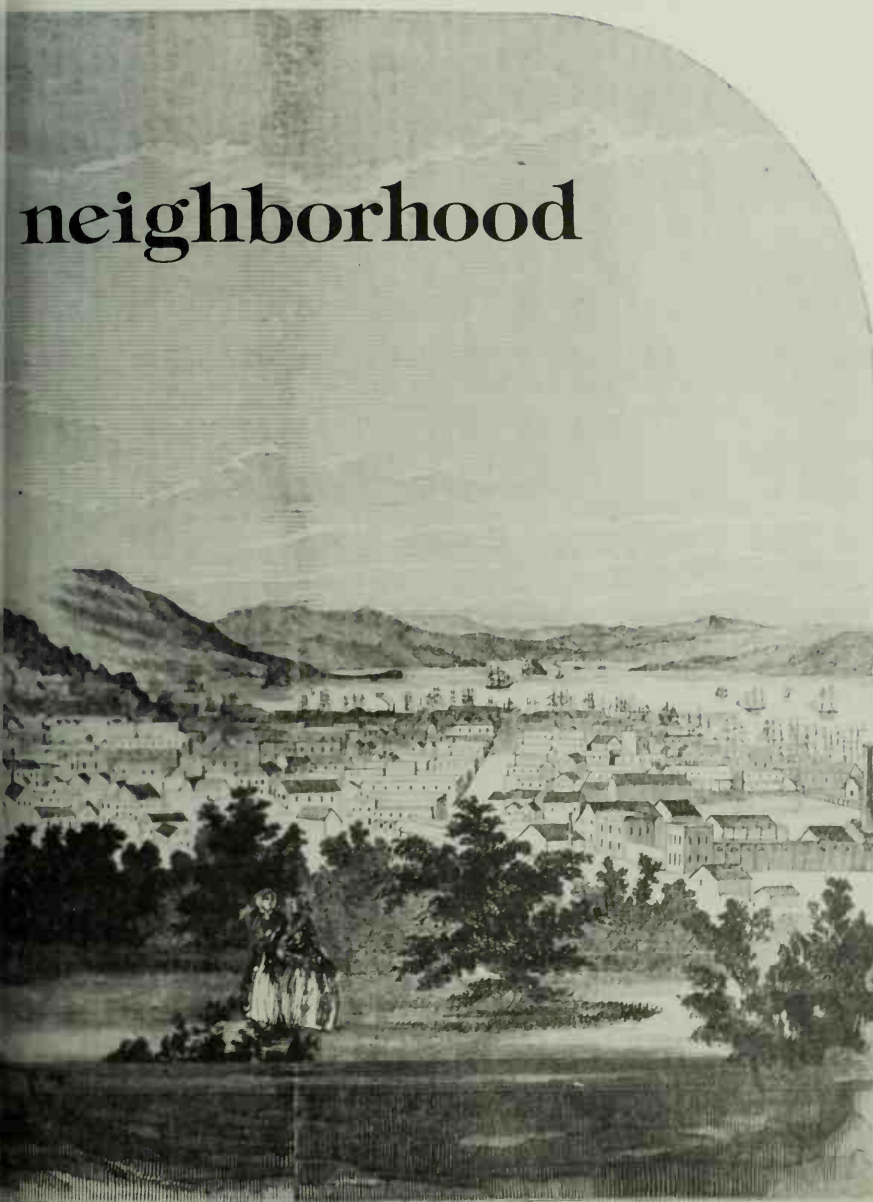
1. Edward Hicks Parry in *The Friend*, Sixth Month 26, 1941.
2. Charles Francis Saunders, "The Literary Recollections of a Brokers' Club," typescript, Huntington Library, San Marino. All manuscripts cited below are from the Saunders collection, Huntington Library.
3. Quoted by Mira C. Saunders in "Inns and Outs," MS.
4. C. F. Saunders to Joseph T. Rothrock, August 6, 1920.
5. Edward Hicks Parry, "A Quaker Naturalist," in *Friends Intelligencer*, Sixth Month 21, 1941.
6. C. F. Saunders, MS notebook, 1898.
7. Carl Eytel to Saunders, [1925?].
8. C. F. Saunders, *Under the Sky in California* (New York, 1913), preface.
9. C. F. Saunders, MS notebook, 1909.
10. Ventura Roseta to Saunders, March 28, 1911.
11. C. F. Saunders, *Under the Sky in California*, 175.
12. Eytel to Saunders, May 24, 1913.
13. C. F. Saunders, *Under the Sky in California* (New York, 1926), preface to the fourth printing.
14. C. F. Saunders, *Finding the Worth While in California* (New York, 1916), p. 213.
15. C. F. Saunders, *The Southern Sierras of California* (Boston and New York, 1923), p. 181.
16. *Ibid.*, 130, note.
17. C. F. Saunders, MS notes for *The Story of Carmelita*.
18. Mira Saunders, "The Expressman," typescript.
19. C. F. Saunders, *Western Wild Flowers and Their Stories* (New York, 1933), xiii-xiv.
20. Mira Saunders in *Pasadena Star-News*, March 30, 1952.
21. C. F. Saunders and J. Smeaton Chase, *California Padres and Their Stories* (Boston and New York, 1915), p. 328.
22. *Ibid.*, 95.
23. Mira Saunders to Lillian F. Robins of Doubleday, Doran and Co., September 16, 1942.
24. C. F. Saunders, *The Southern Sierras of California*, 126.

# Rincon Hill was San Francisco's most genteel





# neighborhood



When Robert Louis Stevenson visited San Francisco in 1879-1880, he found Rincon Hill to be "one of the most San Francisco-y parts" of the city.<sup>1</sup> Twenty-nine-year-old Stevenson was unknown, low on money, and had plenty of time to explore San Francisco. In fair weather, he often left his Bush Street boarding house early in the morning, crossed Market Street, and walked up Rincon Hill to enjoy the views from its 150-foot summit and the countrified feeling it offered in the midst of the city.

Another thing which drew Stevenson to Rincon Hill was its slowly decaying mansions and their old-fashioned gentility which appealed so strongly to the romantic young writer and his Victorian love of pathos. Back in the 1850s and 1860s, Rincon Hill, which extended from Folsom to Bryant streets and from Spear to Third streets, had been San Francisco's most stylish neighborhood.

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Charles Lockwood is the author of *Suddenly San Francisco: The Early Years of an Instant City* (1978) and three books on New York City.

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*Couples promenade and gentlemen show off their steeds on genteel Rincon Hill (at Second Street) c.1857. Modest but handsome frame cottages, some carried around Cape Horn in sections, were beginning to fill in the sunny neighborhood's empty lots.*

*By the mid 1860s, industry was entering the Rincon Hill reserve. First Street was increasingly home to industrial buildings including the Miners Foundry and Machine Works and the Selby Shot Tower.*

Why had well-to-do San Franciscans chosen a South of Market Street location for their homes? San Francisco was a far different city in the early 1850s when these families started settling on Rincon Hill than it was twenty years later. Respectable San Franciscans wanted to avoid all contact with the rowdy saloons, gambling dens, and brothels clustered around Portsmouth Square and the waterfront. Rincon Hill was a suburban location, half a mile from all these unpleasant things, and, what's more, it offered good, virtually fog-free weather and fine views.

In 1850 Rincon Hill was open land, except for a few small trees, overgrown underbrush, and some squatters' shacks and tents. Yet only three years later the houses on Rincon Hill were "numerous" and "elegant," according to the *Annals of San Francisco*.<sup>2</sup> The houses which rose on Rincon Hill in the 1850s and 1860s represented the architectural styles then fashionable in America—the Greek Revival, the Gothic Revival, and the Italianate. W. L. Palmer built an octagonal house at 329 Second Street near Harrison Street. Over on South Park, George Gordon was building handsome stone-fronted row houses around a pretty oval park.

The grandest houses on Rincon Hill, however, stood along Folsom Street, between Second and Third streets. In 1854 John Parrott built an Italianate style mansion in brown-

*(continued)*





A black and white photograph of a large, ornate, two-story house with a prominent porch and balcony, situated on a hill. In the background, a dense urban landscape is visible, featuring numerous buildings and a large number of tall, thin structures, possibly chimneys or masts, rising from the city center. The foreground shows a grassy area with some trees and a small structure.





*The grand Milton S. Latham residence at 630 Folsom Street between Second and Third was described by the Morning Call as "a most unlucky piece of property." Purchased from Joseph "Ophir" Woodworth in 1865, the house passed out of Latham's hands—as it had Woodworth's—when he lost his fortune. By the 1890s, genteel people did not want to live on Folsom Street, and the home became a boardinghouse.*



stone at 620 Folsom Street. Former United States Senator and California Governor Milton S. Latham lived next door at No. 630 in an even more imposing home.

Rincon Hill's decline began around 1870. Industry was taking over the South of Market area, and middle-class families were leaving their pleasant houses and cottages for other parts of town. By the 1870s, the South of Market area had turned into a district of factories, working class cottages and boarding houses, and raucous sailors' bars and hotels.

Another development that permanently harmed fashionable Rincon Hill was the digging of the Second Street "cut" in 1869. Before that, Second Street climbed over and down Rincon Hill at one of its highest points. The steepness of the grade was satisfactory for a little-traveled street in a stylish neighborhood, but it hindered wagon traffic between the South of Market factories and the docks near China Basin. Accordingly, in 1869 the city dug a seventy-five-foot-deep "cut" through Rincon Hill which brought Second Street down to level grade but left an ugly chasm and houses perched perilously close to the edge.<sup>3</sup>

Although Rincon Hill's days as a fashionable address were clearly numbered, rich and prominent families were reluctant to leave the area. Around 1880 "the quarter was still pathetically respectable," wrote



*Next door to the Latham house stood the Parrott mansion, completed in 1854. One of the grandest pre-Nob Hill homes in San Francisco, it maintained its dignity as the neighborhood declined. On Parrott's death, the Wieland brewery family, apparently oblivious to the increasingly noisy world beyond its trimmed lawns, purchased the mansion. It burned in the 1906 fire.*

*Parrott and Latham left their permanent mark on San Francisco, however. New Montgomery Street is only two blocks long because they refused to sell their properties to make way for extension of the street beyond Howard Street.*

Charles Warren Stoddard, “and for three quarters [blocks] at least its handsome residences stared destiny in the face and stood in the midst of flower-bordered lawns, unmindful of decay.”<sup>4</sup> An even better qualified judge of fashion, the *Elite Directory*, thought in 1879 that Rincon Hill was still one of the “most genteel” neighborhoods in the city. “Fragments of polite society still linger there,” it reported, and the directory’s Calling and Address List carried over eighty names with Rincon Hill addresses.<sup>5</sup>

A few remnants of Rincon Hill’s grand past survived through the turn of the century. The Parrott mansion looked much as it always had, but the Latham residence next door had become a boarding house. Most of the old mansions were still standing around South Park. Some were shuttered and silent, probably empty, while others had lost all former pretension and carried signs offering rooms for rent.

All this fading glory vanished in the April, 1906, earthquake and fire. In October of that year, the city-commissioned Marsden Manson Report recommended that Rincon Hill be cut down to provide more flat land for warehouses and factories close to the waterfront. Nothing came of this proposal, though, which surfaced again in 1913 and 1927.<sup>6</sup>

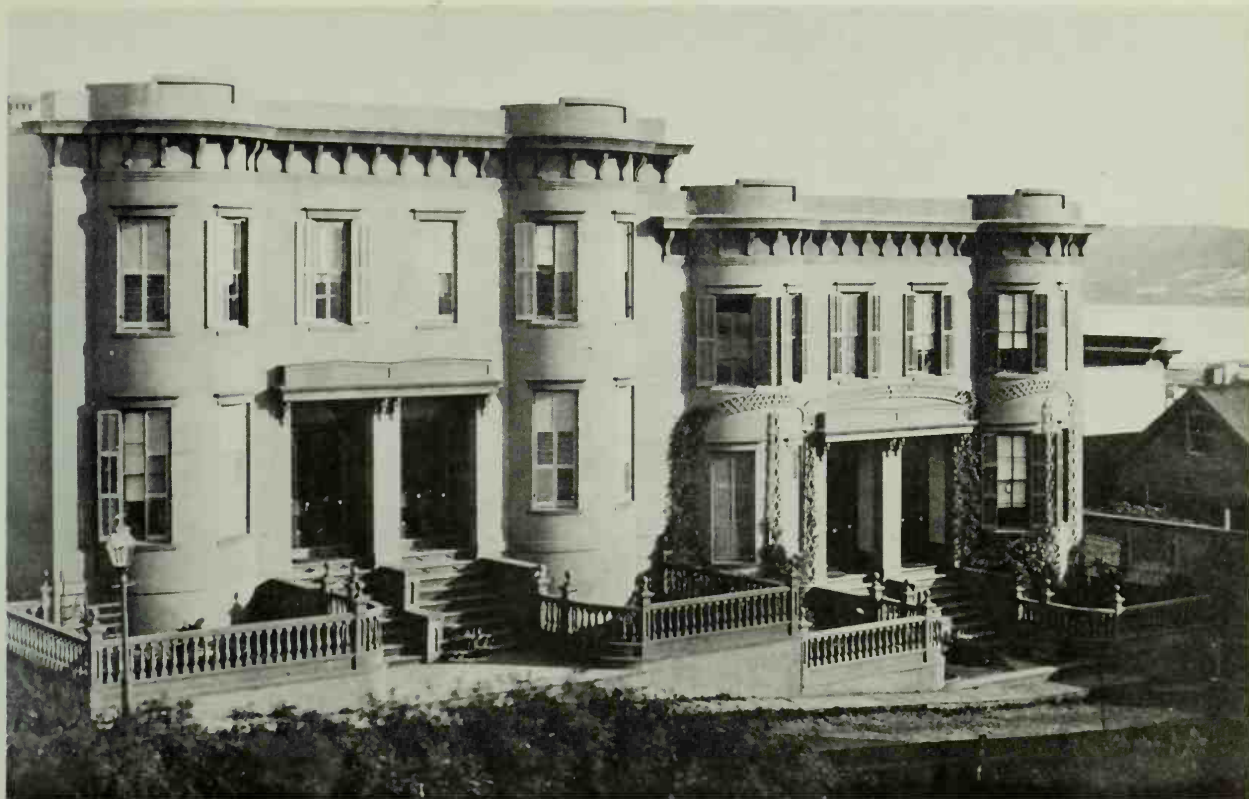
The uncertainty over Rincon Hill’s future discouraged real estate investors from erecting warehouses

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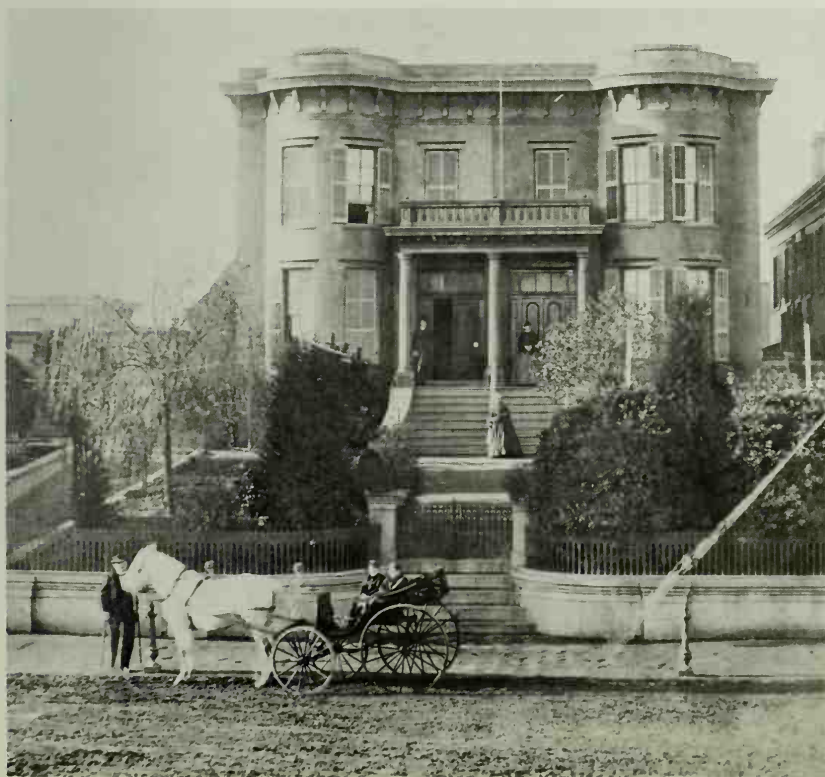


*When Peter Donahue built his mansion on the northeast corner of Bryant and Second Street in the 1860s, he was president of the nearby Union Iron Works. His three-story, forty-room mansion and grounds, which included a carriage house and servants’ quarters, were torn down c.1900. The landmark Schmidt Lithograph building rose on the site.*





*Vernon Place (today Dow Street), a half-block street bounded by Harrison, Folsom, Second, and Hawthorne, boasted double houses with bow fronts and shutters like their Boston counterparts in the 1860s.*

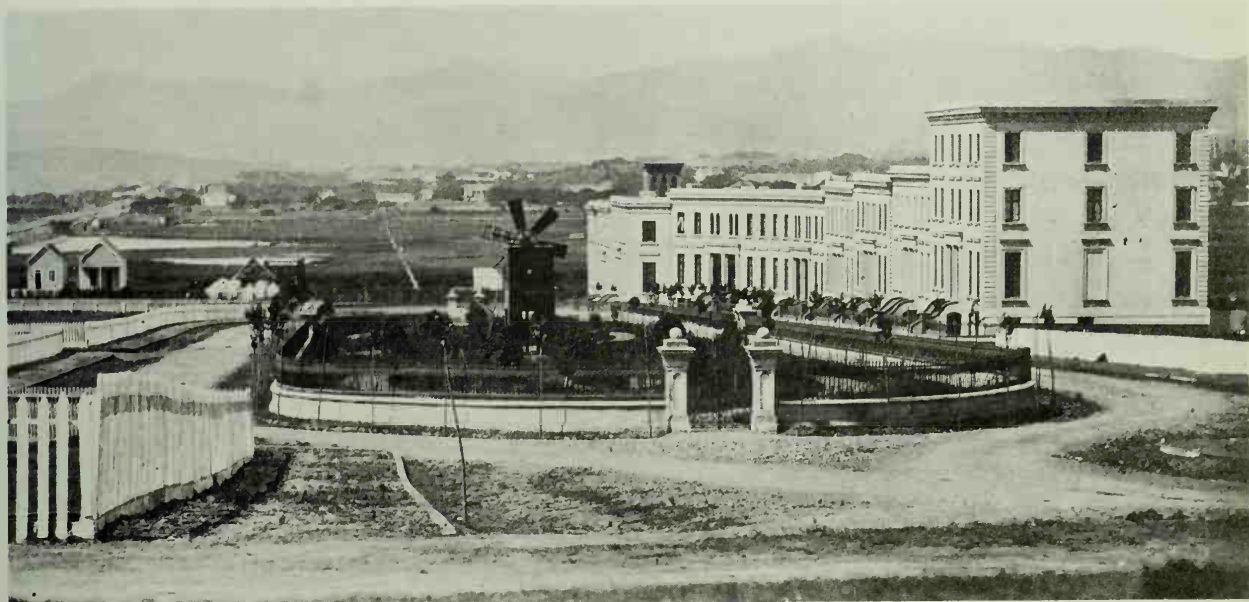


*Bishop William I. Kip's house on Second Street (the bishop stands on the porch) reflects the same eastern architecture. Kip's house literally slid into the Second Street "cut."*



*Some wealthy families went to great lengths to stay in the Rincon Hill neighborhood. John O. Eldridge moved his family and rambling two-story home from Second Street, where it was perilously close to the "cut," to Folsom.*





*Stylish South Park and its dignified row houses around a private, oval-shape garden park reminded San Franciscans of their homes back east. The Englishman George Gordon purchased the six 100-vara lots bounded by Bryant, Brannan, Second, and Third in 1852, built the first row houses, and advertised the properties thusly: "For quiet, economical family residences, free from risks or annoyances of contiguous shops or stores, South Park furnishes the most elegant sites in the City."*





and industrial buildings in the area. When Charles Caldwell Dobie visited Rincon Hill in the early 1930s, he reported that its slopes were "dotted with home-made shacks compounded of refuse lumber, packing-boxes, and sheet iron." Dobie, who often criticized the city's ethnic groups and unusual lifestyles, surprisingly considered "these tiny shelters" to be "very trim and ship-shape. . . . Geraniums run blushing up to the low window-sills, and clamshells outline the occasional attempt at gardening." He went on: "Women are rarely in evidence, which confirms the suspicion that these cabin-like quarters are the dwelling place of dock workers or even seafaring males who like a snug harbor between voyages."<sup>7</sup>

All these shacks and most of Rincon Hill itself disappeared during the construction of the San Francisco Bay Bridge in the 1930s. All that remains of Rincon Hill today is a truncated clump of land with several warehouses and run-down hotels and flats.

Nearby South Park's green ellipse survives today, even though the 1906 fire destroyed the surrounding buildings. South Park was rebuilt with warehouses and machine shops, modest flats, and several hotels for merchant mariners and longshoremen. Reporter Robert O'Brien visited South Park in the 1940s and described the buildings as "all gray,

(continued)



*The digging of the Second Street "cut" in 1869 signaled the beginning of Rincon Hill's decline as the most desirable neighborhood in San Francisco. The "cut" was unsightly; it split Rincon Hill in half; and worse yet, it endangered houses near its edge.*

*South Park remained a stylish address until late in the nineteenth century, but like Rincon Hill, it was an oasis in the middle of the industrial and working class South of Market neighborhood. The modest South Park House stood on Third Street, just around the corner from one entrance to South Park itself.*



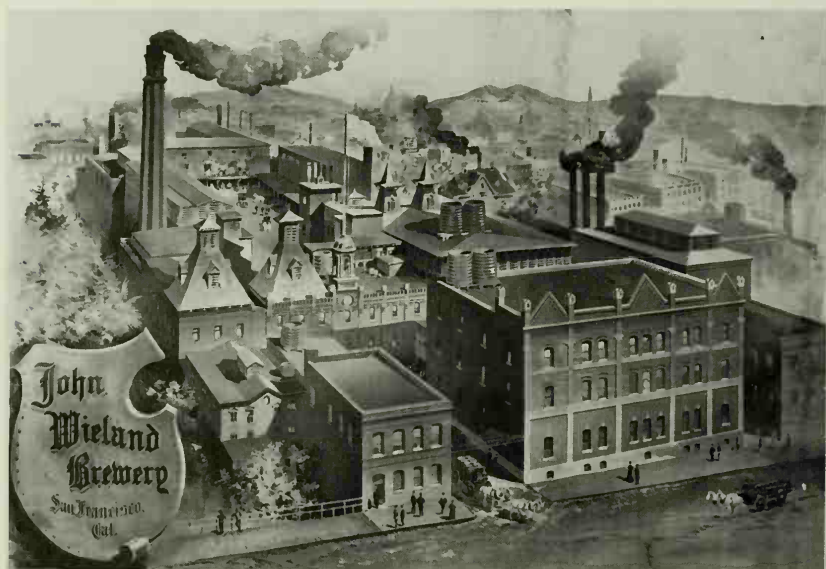
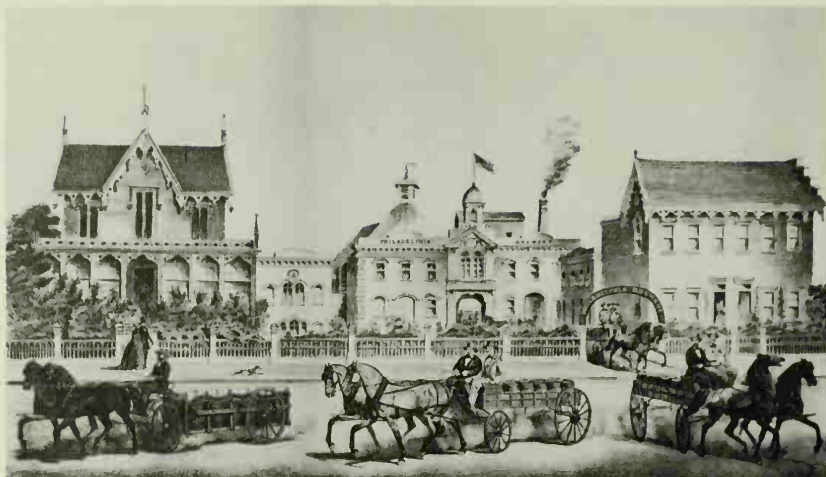
and the effect even in the warm sunshine, was that of a slattern with a hangover, who wished you would go away and leave her alone.”<sup>8</sup>

South Park hasn’t changed much since. Men and women, young and old, white and black, pass the time in the park, enjoying the outdoors and drinking from bottles wrapped in brown paper bags. The buildings are as sad looking and decayed as any in San Francisco.

All the illustrations are from the CHS Library.

## Notes

1. Sydney Colvin, ed., *Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson to his Family and Friends* (New York, 1899), II:21.
2. Frank Soule, John H. Gihon, and James Nesbit, *The Annals of San Francisco* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1855), p. 489.
3. Albert Shumate, *A Visit to Rincon Hill and South Park* (San Francisco: Yerba Buena Chapter/E. Clampus Vitus, 1963), pp. 13–14.
4. Albert Shumate, “Rincon or Telegraph Hill: Robert Louis Stevenson’s Introduction to the South Seas,” *California Historical Quarterly*, 46 (Sept., 1967) 227.
5. *Elite Directory for San Francisco and Oakland for 1879* (San Francisco: Argonaut Publishing Company, 1879), p. 20.
6. Shumate, *A Visit*, 17–18.
7. Charles Caldwell Dobie, *San Francisco: A Pageant* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), pp. 234–35.
8. Robert O’Brien, *This Is San Francisco* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1948), p. 295.



The influx of industry into the South of Market area proved Rincon Hill’s final undoing. As early as 1852, John Wieland announced plans to build a brewery at the northwest corner of Folsom and Second streets. He refused offers to buy him out at substantial profit, and by the late 1850s his brewery had settled into one of the prettiest parts of Rincon Hill. It was a nuisance to local residents, but even the wealthiest families endured such inconveniences in nineteenth-century American cities because zoning laws were nonexistent. Wieland’s brewery started out with just one building, but by the turn of the century, multiple buildings and belching smokestacks identified its progress and prosperity.



Before the "cut," Second Street had been a stylish promenade and shopping street for residents of Rincon Hill and South Park; after, it became a busy industrial and commercial artery. In this view taken soon after the 1906 fire, the iron bridge carrying Harrison Street traffic over the cut is visible in the background. The hastily constructed shacks on the crest of Rincon Hill remained amid the rubble until the construction of the Bay Bridge in the 1930s.



# BLACKS VS. NAVY BLUE

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World War II was a crucible in which a new era of race relations was forged in the United States. For the first time more than a million black men and women served in the armed forces, about half of them overseas. The war also accelerated the migration of blacks to northern and western cities and gave them more economic and political clout than ever before. With Adolf Hitler demonstrating the evils of racism, respectable people and publications no longer could openly espouse white supremacist doctrines. Segregation nevertheless persisted in the United States, and nowhere more obviously than in the military itself. World War II was essentially conducted as a Jim Crow operation by the army, navy and marines, with nearly all black personnel assigned to segregated units commanded by white officers.

The inconsistency of fighting Nazism with racially segregated military units was not lost on black Americans. Accordingly, the armed forces became a special target of protest and organizational activity (helping pave the way for the civil rights activism of the post-war

era). A number of specific incidents focused attention on wartime military segregation, among them the important Mare Island mutiny court martial trial of September and October, 1944. The refusal by fifty black sailors to load ammunition ships at the Mare Island Naval Depot in northern San Francisco Bay produced the navy's first mutiny court martial of the war and the longest and largest mutiny trial in navy history. It also resulted in protests and pressures that helped bring about a remarkable transformation in the navy's racial policies.<sup>1</sup>

The so-called mutiny at Mare Island had its origins in pre-war navy personnel policies. In 1941 blacks were still excluded from all naval assignments except the messman's service. Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox argued that to allow black sailors to do other tasks would "provoke discord and demoralization." Admiral Chester

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Charles Wollenberg is Reviews Editor of the magazine and author of *All Deliberate Speed: Segregation and Exclusion in California Schools, 1855-1975*.

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## The Mare Island Mutiny Court Martial

*Bits of wreckage (marked by arrows) protrude from the water at Port Chicago, all that remained of the two ammunition ships which exploded. In the foreground are the shattered remnants of the dock with its railroad equipment and installations.*





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*The surviving stevedores were  
reassembled at Mare Island and . . .  
ordered to load ammunition ships.  
Some 328 men refused.*

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W. Nimitz explained that "the policy of now enlisting men of the Colored race for any branch of naval service except the messman's branch was adopted to meet the best interests of general ship efficiency."

For a time after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the navy tried to maintain its policy of using blacks exclusively as "chambermaids for the braid." When Dorie Miller, a black messman, manned a machine gun and shot down at least four Japanese planes during the Pearl Harbor attack, navy brass initially played down the incident, apparently to prevent attention to the fact that black men could perform well in combat. But under pressure from civil rights groups and President Franklin Roosevelt, Navy Secretary Knox finally announced on April 7, 1942, that black enlistees henceforth would be accepted for "general service." The "messman only" era was at an end.<sup>2</sup>

The navy's new policy was not one of integration, however. A segregated facility for black recruits was established at Great Lakes Naval Training Center in Illinois, with smaller segregated installations set up at Memphis and Hampton Institute in Virginia. Except for messmen, blacks were assigned to shore duty only, primarily as stevedores and seabees in segregated units commanded by whites. In 1943 the navy began accepting black draftees and a very few black officer candidates. In 1944 the secretary of the navy established a unit of black Waves, members of the women's reserve, and assigned black crews to two auxiliary vessels. Also in 1944 the navy published a "Guide to the Command of Negro Personnel" which proclaimed that "the navy

accepts no theories of racial differences in inborn ability" and cautioned officers against referring to blacks as "niggers," "nigras," "boy," "coon," "darkey," or "jig."<sup>3</sup> But the official policy of segregation continued.

One of the first naval installations to receive "general service" black enlistees was the Port Chicago Naval Magazine on San Francisco Bay, a facility about thirty-five miles northeast of San Francisco and fifteen miles east of Mare Island. Following Secretary Knox's "general service" order of 1942, segregated units of black sailors were assigned to load ammunition ships at Port Chicago. On the evening of July 17, 1944, about half of the Port Chicago stevedores were loading the *Quinalt Victory* and *E. A. Bryan* when a massive explosion rocked the entire area. The blast looked like a "flaming doughnut," a "blinding flash that literally filled the sky." After the fire subsided, the place where the men had been working was described as "a scorched earth scene," with both ships and the pier at which they were docked totally destroyed. Most buildings on the naval base and in the town of Port Chicago had been damaged, and windows were shattered in nearby Martinez. Approximately 320 men died in the blast, more than 200 of whom were black sailors who had been loading the ammunition.<sup>4</sup>

In the days following the event, a navy spokesman expressed doubt that the exact cause of the explosion would ever be known, and he commended the surviving black personnel at Port Chicago for their "coolness and bravery." Off-duty and in their barracks at the time of the blast, the men had immediately begun fighting fires and searching for survivors. They were later joined by black sailors from Mare Island, and eventually four of the men who had battled the flames raging among the boxcars loaded with ammunition received decorations. Admiral C. H. Wright, commandant of the Twelfth Naval District, particularly commended the black sailors who "gave their lives in the service of their country. . . . Their sacrifice could not have been greater had it occurred on a battleship or a beachhead."<sup>5</sup>

# Exclusive Aerial Photos of the Disaster

## San Francisco Chronicle **EXTRA**

FOUNDED 1865—VOL. CLIX, NO. 4

CCCC

SAN FRANCISCO, WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 1944

DAILY 5 CENTS, SUNDAY 15 CENTS: DAILY AND SUNDAY FOR THE MOUNTAIN

# BLAST DEATH TOLL NOW 377; 1000 INJURED!

## Terrific Explosion In the Bay Region

Damage at Port Chicago  
Is Well Over Five Million;  
No Cause Has Been Found

**The Army Brings Up Armored Car  
And Troops to Protect Property;  
Only a Few Bodies Are Recovered**

Death toll resulting from the explosion Monday night at Port Chicago, on San Francisco Bay of tons of war munitions in the holds of two ships mounted to the 377 mark yesterday as semi-official estimates were compiled.

Damage was estimated to be more than \$5,000,000, excluding the cost of the munitions lost. The ships were valued at about \$4,300,000.

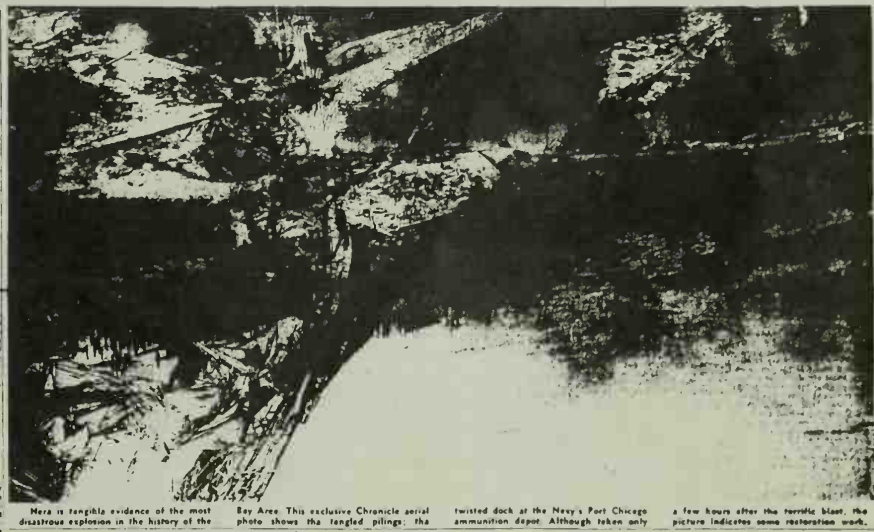
Destruction of the huge Army arsenal at Berkeley, only seven miles from the scene of the Port Chicago catastrophe was averted by intense rain. The blast, according to military officials, caused damage here estimated at \$100,000 to the arsenal facilities and injured six persons.

Reports from official sources gave that death toll:

**KNOWN DEAD**  
234 Enlisted Navy personnel.  
3 Navy officers.  
79 United States Maritime Commission seamen.  
1 Coast Guardsman.  
1 Civilian railroad worker.

**EST. TOTAL**

To that total must be added Navy gunnery and, members of two armed guard crews of the two military ships. Strength of a guard crew is undefined military personnel. Fourteen unknown military personnel.



Mare is tangible evidence of the most disastrous explosion in the history of the

Bay Area. This exclusive Chronicle aerial photo shows the tangled pilings, the

twisted dock at the Navy's Port Chicago ammunition depot. Although taken only

a few hours after the terrific blast, the picture indicates some restoration work.

On August 9 and 10, some three weeks after the tragedy, the surviving stevedores were reassembled at Mare Island and, for the first time since the explosion, ordered to load ammunition ships. Some 328 men refused to do so, explaining that they feared another blast. After the initial refusal to work, Captain N. H. Goss, commander of the Mare Island depot, instructed his 3 division officers to give individual work orders to each man, and while this apparently was not done in all cases, 70 sailors did subsequently agree to load ammunition. On August 11 Admiral Wright addressed the remaining 258 men. He permitted about 25 men to state their

grievances and reported that they did so "freely and respectfully." After Wright's speech, all but 44 of the sailors agreed to work, although 6 more men later refused. The 50 men abstaining were then separated from their units and held in detention.<sup>6</sup>

On August 13 Captain Goss prepared a written memorandum to summarize the oral report he already had given Admiral Wright. The memo not only covered the facts of the incident, but also included Goss's views on the roots of the problem. Goss stated that ever since blacks had been assigned to Port Chicago and Mare Island, there had been "agitators, ringleaders among

these men." He also thought that the sailors had been subjected to "outside propaganda and subversive influence." Goss apparently considered himself an expert on what he called the "normal characteristics of Negroes," and he believed that the Port Chicago men were unusual because they had "a persistent disposition to question orders, to argue, and in effect to attempt to bargain." Another "new characteristic" which Goss had "never observed before among Negroes" was sensitivity about discrimination. This he could not understand, given "the extreme care and patience which has been exercised both at Mare Island and Port Chicago to avoid discrimination." Goss concluded that "concerted action and persistent refusal to obey orders" among the men "indicated a mutinous attitude." He recommended that the 50 hold-outs be charged with mutiny before a general court martial. The 208 who agreed to work after Admiral Wright's speech should be charged with a lesser offense before a summary court martial. The 70 who chose to return to work on August 10 should be free from disciplinary action.<sup>7</sup>

Admiral Wright had already forwarded Goss's oral recommendations to Washington by August 13. Wright himself was not so free with his personal opinions as Goss, but he did note in his report to Washington that he believed that "a considerable portion of the men involved are of a low order of mentality. . . ." Wright urged that ammunition handling was a "logical use" of black personnel but said that "pains must be taken" to avoid the appearance of discrimination. The admiral suggested a rotation system in which the black men would occasionally be given other duties and the assignment of some white units to the task of loading ammunition.<sup>8</sup>

Wright's report was addressed to the new secretary of the navy, James V. Forrestal, who had replaced Frank Knox after the latter's death in the spring of 1944. Forrestal approved Wright's recommendations and on August 28 wrote to President Roosevelt informing him

of the situation. The initial draft of the letter to the president simply covered the facts of the case and the disciplinary action planned. But the final draft signed on August 28 included the proposal to rotate black sailors in other jobs and to assign white units to handle ammunition. Forrestal told the president that these measures would "avoid any semblance of discrimination against Negroes."<sup>9</sup>

**T**he mutiny trial of the black sailors began on September 14 at Treasure Island Naval Base in San Francisco Bay. Retired Admiral Hugo S. Osterhaus presided as president of the seven-man trial board. Chief prosecutor and trial judge advocate was Lt. Commander James F. Coakley. Before the war, Coakley had been an assistant district attorney in Alameda County in an office once headed by Earl Warren. (After the war Coakley was elected district attorney, and he gained prominence in the prosecution of Berkeley demonstrators in the 1960s.) The five-man defense team at Treasure Island was led by Lt. Gerald E. Velmann.

The defense lost its most important legal battle before the trial began. Velmann had submitted a pre-trial brief calling for dismissal of the mutiny charge in which he quoted from *Winthrop's Military Law and Precedents*. *Winthrop's* defined mutiny as "unlawful opposition or resistance to, or defiance of superior military authority with a deliberate attempt to usurp, subvert or override the same." The brief argued that this definition clearly required that men charged with mutiny must intend to seize or overthrow command. At worst, he argued, the Mare Island sailors had simply disobeyed an order with no intent to "usurp, subvert or override" authority.<sup>10</sup>

The prosecution countered with its own quotation from *Winthrop's*: "Collective insubordination or simultaneous disobedience of a lawful order by two or more



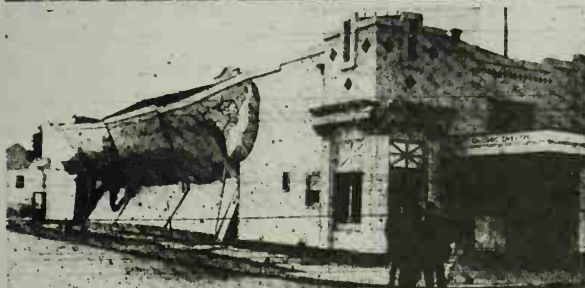
# Where Death and Destruction Struck

San Francisco Examiner  
July 19, 1944 U.S.C. 8



**WRECKAGE**—This is a general view of the enormous damage done to the dock area at Port Chicago by the explosion of the two ammunition ships. Literally blown to matchwood, the debris in the

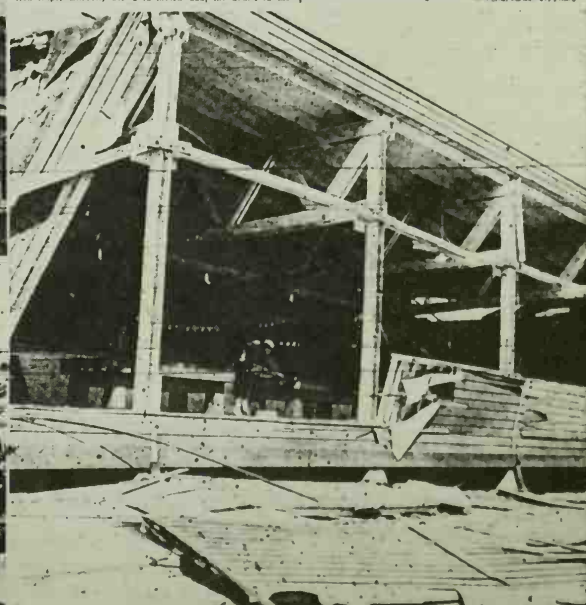
background is what was left of railroad equipment and installations. Construction reduced the two automobiles in the foreground to little more than road debris for the junk yard.



**BUCKLED**—This is the exterior of the Port Chicago movie picture theater, one wall buckled in. The entire audience of 195 escaped with only minor injuries. Joe Meyer, manager of the theater, who was

in the projection booth, was knocked unconscious, but recovered quickly enough to call down to the theater and tell everyone to leave quietly.

—Photo by Jack Preston for Examiner.



**GAME GOES ON**—The Navy enlisted men's recreation hall was more than a mile away from the aerial explosion, yet one wall was blown completely out and another part of the building col-

lapsed. In the above scene showing the blown-out wall, these padlocks have conclusively picked up a cue and are started making a few practice shots on one of the goal before.



**RUBBLE**—A sleeping scene on the Port Chicago waterfront which was repeated scores of times. Observers pointed out that no aerial attack by blockbuster bombs could not have created more havoc and

destruction. One witness who narrowly escaped injury said: "I thought the Japs had come over for sure in answer to our recent B-29 bombings of their country."

—United Press Wire Photo.

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*Faced with conflicting definitions  
[of mutiny], the trial board sided with  
the prosecution.*

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persons . . . is an endeavor to make a revolt or mutiny." Commander Coakley argued that under this definition, he was not required to prove that the defendants intended to seize command. Instead, "evidence showing a joint, collective and persistent refusal by two or more men to work after a lawful order to do so" could constitute mutiny. Faced with conflicting definitions, the trial board sided with the prosecution and refused to dismiss the charge.<sup>11</sup>

Coakley then had to show that there had been an organized effort or conspiracy to disobey orders among the men. On the second day of the trial his attempt to do so created another major legal battle. The prosecution presented the testimony of officers who said that they heard black sailors encouraging their compatriots not to load ammunition. The sailors reportedly used such phrases as "Don't go to work for the white m— — — f— — —," "Let's all stick together," and "We have the officers by the b— — —." The problem with this "evidence" was that none of the witnesses could identify the persons who were supposed to have made these remarks. Lt. Ernest Delucchi, for example, testified that he heard the comments while standing in formation with his back to the men. Veltmann argued that this testimony was inadmissible hearsay and that even if the statements had been heard, there was no way of telling if any of the defendants had made them. Again, however, Admiral Osterhaus ruled in Coakley's favor and allowed the testimony to be entered in the record.<sup>12</sup>

Despite these major blows to the defense case, Veltmann and his colleagues waged a spirited legal battle. In cross-examination they forced prosecution witnesses to

admit that the defendants had been polite and respectful and had obeyed all orders except those to load ammunition. Lt. P. H. Pembroke, a navy psychiatrist, testified that the Port Chicago explosion could produce such great trauma among the survivors that the men might reasonably refuse to load ammunition out of a "sense of self-protection." He pointed out that the men had received no psychiatric assistance in dealing with this trauma. Chaplain J. M. Flowers testified that when he admitted his own fear to the defendants and urged them to overcome their fear in order to help "the men in the foxholes," one of the sailors had replied, "In the foxholes a man has a chance to fight back."<sup>13</sup>

The heart of the defense case was the testimony of the accused themselves, and all fifty men appeared on their own behalf. Generally, they testified that they had acted out of fear and had no intention of challenging military authority. They denied planning the work stoppage and said that a petition that had circulated among the men had only requested a change of duty, not urged men to refuse to work. None of the defendants admitted making statements encouraging others to disobey orders, and most claimed they never received individual orders to load ammunition. Many of the men said they would have obeyed such orders had they been given.<sup>14</sup>

Occasionally, the defendants' testimony included some unusual facts. Ollie Green had a broken wrist, and John Dunn was seventeen years old and weighed just 104 pounds, yet both men had been ordered to do the heavy work of loading ammunition. Joe Small described the panic that ensued among the defendants when a piece of paper became caught in the fan in the detention barrack and produced a loud, cracking noise. Several men contended that pre-trial statements taken by the judge advocate's staff were inaccurate. Alphonso MacPherson testified that during the pre-trial interview Coakley had told him to "come clean" or "you will probably get shot." Coakley angrily denied MacPherson's charge, accusing Veltmann of "hitting below the belt."

A verbal battle ensued until Admiral Osterhaus observed that MacPherson had not been shot and that it was time for lunch. When defendant Frank Henry neglected to say "sir" in answer to one of Coakley's questions, the prosecutor asked "Did you learn to say 'sir' when you talk to an officer. . . . Why don't you say it instead of being so insolent?" Veltmann vehemently objected to Coakley's remark, and this time Osterhaus agreed with the defense.<sup>15</sup>

In spite of their testimony to the contrary, it is likely that the defendants were motivated by more than fear of another explosion. Robert L. Allen, editor of *Black Scholar* magazine, has recently interviewed some of the surviving Mare Island "mutineers," and he concludes that the work stoppage was a legitimate planned protest against general conditions of segregation and discrimination in the navy and specifically against the lack of recreational facilities, safety precautions, and fair treatment at Port Chicago. At the subsequent court martial, Allen persuasively argues, fear of conviction on mutiny charges led the defendants to deny that they had planned the incident.<sup>16</sup>

Although the confidential reports and memoranda of the navy command indicate concern about the "appearance" or "semblance" of discrimination at Port Chicago, the defense lawyers never identified discrimination as an explanation or justification for the Mare Island incident. In this the lawyers were greatly at odds with leaders of the Bay Area's black community. Joseph James, president of the San Francisco branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), said he was "well aware of the pattern of discrimination practiced in the navy and very much concerned about this trial." Mrs. Irma Lewis of Oakland stated, "We mothers want to know why these loading

crews are all Negroes." Reverend C. D. Tolliver of San Francisco also felt it was "unfair that Negroes should always be assigned to dangerous tasks," and J. C. Henderson, an Oakland attorney, believed that "the discriminatory policy of the navy and the overall conditions to which the boys on trial have been subjected should be considered." Henderson explained, "Sometimes it becomes hard to turn the other cheek, even though the oppressor is our brother."<sup>17</sup>

By 1944 Bay Area black leaders were struggling to cope with the consequences of a massive increase in the region's black population. Wartime production created thousands of new industrial jobs, and black immigrants from the South were a major new source of manpower. Between 1940 and 1944, San Francisco's black population grew from less than 5,000 to over 12,000. Similar increases occurred in Oakland and Berkeley, and far greater rates of growth were recorded for the shipyard towns of Richmond and Vallejo, adjacent to Mare Island. For the region as a whole, the black population increased by more than 200 percent between 1940 and 1944.<sup>18</sup>

Local NAACP President James noted that before the war, Bay Area blacks seldom encountered "Jim Crow treatment" and "recognizing their apparent good fortune, generally exercised care lest they attract too much attention." But the population boom, James observed, had resulted in increasing examples of blatant prejudice. Housing discrimination was producing the area's first black ghetto neighborhoods. Over half the new black population worked in the shipyards, and the chief shipyard union, the boilermakers, required blacks to join segregated "auxiliary locals." In 1944, 1700 black workers at Marinship Company in Sausalito refused to pay union dues unless allowed to join the regular boilermaker locals. The Marin County company honored its union contract by firing the rebels, but in January of 1945 the California supreme court ordered their reinstatement. Joseph James observed that by 1944 the local



NAACP branch was carrying "the burden of protest and representation for the Negro community."<sup>19</sup>

It was no surprise that the NAACP became involved in the Mare Island case. In late September, James asked assistance from the organization's New York headquarters. On October 10, Thurgood Marshall, the NAACP chief counsel, flew to San Francisco with special travel priority supplied by Navy Secretary Forrestal to observe the trial. Marshall met with prosecution and defense lawyers and interviewed all fifty defendants. He soon was convinced that the men were being unjustly prosecuted: "They have told me they were willing to go to jail to get a change of duty because of their terrific fear of explosives, but they had no idea that verbal expression of their fear constituted mutiny." Marshall stayed in the Bay Area twelve days, and his presence helped attract national attention to the trial, particularly that of the national black press. Before leaving, Marshall promised that the NAACP would "expose the whole rotten navy setup which led to the Port Chicago explosion and in turn to the so-called 'mutiny' trial." "Negroes in the navy don't mind loading ammunition," he cautioned, "they just want to know why they are the only ones doing the loading."<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile, the trial at Treasure Island droned on. On October 18, more than a month after the court martial body originally convened, the defense finally finished presentation of its case. Coakley then called several prosecution rebuttal witnesses to counter a number of allegations made by the defense. Division officers, for example, were called to deny defense testimony that crews loading ammunition had sometimes been forced to race against each other. Members of the judge advocate's staff assured the court that no coercion had been used in taking pre-trial statements and that the statements were accurate, though not always in the defendant's exact words.<sup>21</sup>

On October 23, Lt. Velmann presented the defense's final argument. He repeated his objection to the mutiny

charge and argued that the defendants had taken no overt action to "usurp, subvert or overthrow" authority. Again Velmann objected to the use of hearsay evidence and questioned whether precise orders had been given to all the men. He contended that the defendants had been motivated by understandable fear rather than a desire to seize authority.

Commander Coakley's final prosecution argument disputed Velmann on every point. The prosecutor argued that the men had repeatedly disobeyed orders given over a three-day period. He contended that the defendants had discussed the matter among themselves and urged others to join them and that this constituted a "collective refusal" to accept authority. The men who participated in such a refusal had entered into a conspiracy to mutiny "whether they realized it or not," and fear was no defense for such a crime. Coakley concluded that "any man so depraved as to be afraid to load ammunition" deserved no leniency.<sup>22</sup>

Apparently, Coakley's arguments were persuasive. The trial had lasted thirty-three days and produced a transcript of over 1400 pages. Theoretically, there were fifty separate sentences to decide. Yet on October 24 the trial board deliberated just eighty minutes, during which they also managed to eat lunch, and then found all the defendants guilty. The sentences were not immediately announced, but the board had unhesitatingly sentenced each man to fifteen years detention, reduction of rating to apprentice seaman, and dishonorable discharge.<sup>23</sup>

The trial board's decision was only the first step toward final sentencing, however. Admiral Wright would review the decision, and his findings would in turn be reviewed by the advocate general's office in Washington. Finally, Secretary Forrestal would approve the final decision. At each stage, sentences could be reduced but not increased. On November 15 Admiral Wright confirmed the guilty verdicts but reduced the sentences of forty men because of youth or lack of previous misconduct. Five defendants had their confinement reduced to

*Seated around the table in front of the fifty accused seamen are the navy officers who conducted the men's defense at the Treasure Island court martial trial.*



eight years, eleven to ten years, and twenty-four to twelve years. The remaining ten received the full fifteen-year sentences.<sup>24</sup> The men were then taken to Terminal Island Disciplinary Barracks in Southern California to begin serving their time.

Expressing shock and outrage, the November, 1944, issue of the NAACP magazine, *Crisis*, reported that Thurgood Marshall and his staff were preparing a legal brief on behalf of the convicted sailors. The magazine also quoted Marshall as saying that the men were tried "solely because of their race and color."<sup>25</sup> Marshall was more circumspect in his brief. The document, addressed to the advocate general, repeated the defense objections to the mutiny charge and to the admission of hearsay evidence. In addition, it objected to the procedure of a mass trial for all fifty defendants, arguing that this made it difficult to determine degrees of individual guilt and innocence. Marshall condemned the pre-trial publicity surrounding the case, particularly navy press releases and photographs which made it clear that all the defendants were black. Marshall also charged that Coakley had subtly injected racial prejudice into the proceedings. The prosecutor had questioned defendants from the North about their homes, for example, but not those from the South. Marshall argued that Coakley was attempting to give the impression that the incident was due to northern black ringleaders and troublemakers.<sup>26</sup>

On April 3, 1945, the NAACP counsel followed up his written brief with a personal appearance at the advocate general's office in Washington, D.C. Marshall discussed his impression of the defendants, describing them as without "group cohesion" and "apart on everything, including intellect, respectfulness, if you please, and capability of making up their own minds." Half were under twenty-one, and a couple were "just plain kids." He again bitterly attacked Coakley's conduct at the trial, charging him with prejudice and unethical behavior. Marshall commented that the defense lawyers did a good job, but he argued that as naval officers they were

limited in the issues they could raise at the trial and hinted that discrimination might be one of those issues. Finally, he reminded the advocate general's staff that "the convictions will forever stand as a disgrace to the entire Negro personnel of the United States navy."<sup>27</sup>

Even before Marshall's personal appearance, an advocate-general staff memorandum had raised some of the same legal points as the NAACP brief. The memo also questioned the admittance of hearsay evidence and the loose definition of mutiny accepted by the court. Accordingly, on May 17, 1945, Acting Navy Secretary Ralph A. Bard informed Admiral Wright that Forrestal wished the court martial trial board to reconvene and reconsider the case without using hearsay evidence and in light of a definition of mutiny which required a "deliberate purpose to usurp, subvert or override" authority. In effect, Forrestal was agreeing with the original defense objections, but he was not throwing out the case. He only asked the trial board to reconsider the decision. The board met briefly and on June 12 "respectfully adhered" to its original verdict. One week later Admiral Wright approved the verdict and repeated the same sentence reductions he made the previous November. On July 13 Bard announced that the navy found the proceedings at Treasure Island fair and the sentences legal, but that the secretary of the navy would still consider mitigating factors.<sup>28</sup>

While the Mare Island case made its way through the navy's appeal channels, Forrestal began moving to liberalize the service's racial policies. In September, 1944, he replaced the commander of the black training facility at Great Lakes, and its rigid segregation policies began to change. In June, 1945, the bureau of naval personnel announced the full integration of all its training facilities, and in August the predominantly white members of



an integrated Great Lakes training battalion elected a black as their "honor man." In 1944 and 1945 black crews were assigned to some small combat ships, and integrated crews were tried on auxiliary vessels. In December, 1945, Forrestal finally ordered that "in the administration of naval personnel, no differentiation shall be made because of color."<sup>29</sup>

Forrestal's actions were undoubtedly influenced by growing evidence of racial tension and conflict in the navy. In December, 1944, a full-scale riot broke out between black seabees and white marines on Guam. In 1945 black seabees at Port Hueneme, California, staged a hunger strike to protest discrimination. But the Mare Island "mutiny" remained the most publicized incident, and Forrestal was determined that there would be no repetition of the case. In December, 1944, he ordered that the task of ammunition loading henceforth should be given to "a cross-section of recruit-training graduates."<sup>30</sup>

Forrestal's most significant action on racial matters was the appointment of Lester Granger as his "special representative" to study race relations in the navy. Granger, a black graduate of Dartmouth (Forrestal's *alma mater*), had served five years as executive secretary of the Urban League. In the six months following his navy appointment in March, 1945, Granger travelled 50,000 miles and visited sixty-seven naval installations at home and abroad. He consulted hundreds of officers and found many of them "anxious to remove barriers." He also talked to about 10,000 black sailors without their officers present. In these "heart-to-heart" discussions, the men spoke "freely and sometimes bitterly about conditions they faced daily." Granger made periodic reports to Forrestal and claimed to notice "very progressive changes" on a month-to-month basis.<sup>31</sup>

In this changing environment, it is not surprising that the navy brass increasingly viewed the sentences of the Mare Island defendants as unnecessarily harsh. When the war ended in August of 1945, there was no longer the

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*The defense lawyers did a good job,  
but . . . as naval officers they  
were limited in the issues they  
could raise at the trial.*

---

same need to "set an example." On September 8, the chief of naval personnel recommended a reduction of the men's sentences by one year. On October 15, a Captain Stassen wrote a staff memorandum to Forrestal defending the Mare Island verdict and even arguing that a "non-colored" battalion would have received tougher treatment. Nevertheless, Stassen suggested the sentences be reduced to a total of two years for defendants with good conduct records and three years for all others, with credit given for the nearly one year already served.<sup>32</sup>

Forrestal approved Stassen's recommendations on October 17, but that was not to be the secretary's final word on the matter. Granger and perhaps other staff members pressed for full amnesty, and they convinced the secretary to agree to this proposal by the end of December. On January 6, 1946, Granger informed the *New York Times* that the sentences of most of the Mare Island defendants, along with those of thirty-six seabees arrested on Guam, would be "set aside." On January 7, more than fifteen months after the original court martial sentences, the navy officially announced that forty-seven of the fifty Mare Island sailors had been returned to active duty and would be given honorable discharges if they completed their enlistments with good records. Two other defendants in navy hospitals presumably would be returned to active duty when released from treatment. One man was kept in detention because his conduct record "did not warrant consideration." The executive officer at the Terminal Island Disciplinary Barracks informed the NAACP that the men under his

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*"All restrictions . . . of assignments  
for which Negro personnel are eligible  
are hereby lifted."*

---

care had been released and were "presumably overseas."<sup>33</sup>

Granger also told the *New York Times* that the majority of black naval personnel still were "bitterly convinced that a general policy debarred them from advancing as rapidly as their abilities warranted." But he quite accurately predicted that such policies would soon disappear. On February 27, 1946, the navy issued Circular Letter 46-48 which read: "Effective immediately all restrictions governing types of assignments for which Negro personnel are eligible are hereby lifted. Henceforth they shall be eligible for all types of assignments, in all ratings in all facilities and in all ships . . . in the utilization of housing, messing, and other facilities, no special or unusual provisions will be made for the accommodation of Negroes."<sup>34</sup> Jim Crow no longer wore a navy uniform.

In the four years from early 1942 to early 1946, the navy had moved from having the most restrictive racial policy among the armed forces to the most liberal. The monumental change had been a three-stage process moving from almost complete exclusion of blacks to segregation and then to integration. Of course, reality never fully corresponded to official policy. Racial separation was incomplete in the early war years, and racism and *de facto* segregation persisted in spite of Forrestal's orders to the contrary. In 1946 more blacks were still in the messman's service than any other naval branch. But the navy had taken a substantial step; it had removed its official sanction from segregation and white supremacy. When President Harry Truman ordered the complete integration of all armed forces in July,

1948, only the navy was already in technical if not full compliance.<sup>35</sup>

In the midst of the Mare Island trial, Walter A. Gordon, a prominent black Berkeley attorney, observed that "any policy that brings about segregation based on race is bound to lead to points of conflict."<sup>36</sup> This was the lesson the navy had learned. The change in navy racial policies may have been partially due to manpower needs and the personal convictions of Forrestal and others in the service hierarchy. Pressure from civil rights groups and the black press certainly played a major role. But it was incidents such as the Mare Island "mutiny" that dramatized the ideological and moral inconsistencies of segregation and proved that black sailors would fight back against racism. It demonstrated that a segregated navy meant a disorderly navy. Lester Granger believed that the release of the Mare Island defendants reflected "the anxiety of navy officialdom to justify its racial record."<sup>37</sup> The release of the prisoners also symbolized the navy's realization that it could no longer afford the hypocrisy of segregation.

The photographs on pages 63 and 73 are Official US Navy photographs. The newspaper pages are from the *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 19, 1944, pages 1 and 2.

## Notes

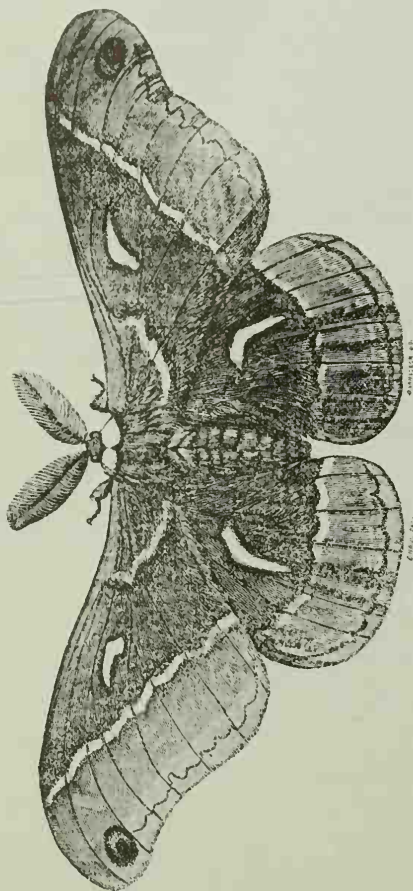
1. The best short description of the Mare Island incident is in Florence Murray, *The Negro Handbook 1946-47* (New York, 1947), p. 347-349.
2. Lawrence D. Reddick, "The Negro in the United States Navy During World War II," *Journal of Negro History*, April, 1947, p. 202-208; Richard M. Dalfiume, *Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces: Fighting on Two Fronts* (Columbia, Mo., 1969), p. 101; Lee Nichols, *Breakthrough on the Color Front* (New York: 1945), pp. 55-58; Jack D. Foner, *Blacks and the Military in American History: a New Perspective* (New York, 1974), pp. 167-170.
3. Reddick, "Negro During World War II," 209-215; Harry Lorin Binns, "Negroes in the Navy," *Commonweal*, September

- 21, 1945, pp. 546-547; Richard J. Stillman, *Integration of the Negro in the U.S. Armed Forces* (New York, 1968), pp. 22-23; Denis Nelson, *Integration of the Negro into the U.S. Navy* (New York, 1951), oo. 27-37.
4. *New York Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Francisco News*, *San Francisco Examiner*, July 18, 19, 20, 1944.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Murray, *Negro Handbook*, 347-348; "Commandant, 12th Naval District, C. H. Wright to Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, 12 August, 1944," memo on microfilm, Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C.
7. "Commandant, 12th Naval District from N. H. Goss, 13 August, 1944," memo on microfilm, Naval Historical Center.
8. "Wright to Forrestal, 12 August, 1944."
9. "Memorandum for the President from James V. Forrestal, 28 August, 1944," microfilm, Naval Historical Center.
10. "Objection of Accused to Charge and Specification" in "Case of Julius J. Allen *et al.*, Trial Transcript," microfilm, Naval Historical Center.
11. "Judge Advocate's Trial Brief on the Law of Mutiny" in "Trial Transcript."
12. "Trial Transcript," 42-43, *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 16, 1944.
13. "Trial Transcript," 103-104, 106; *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 19, 1944.
14. "Summary Testimony in the Case of Julius J. Allen," in "Trial Transcript," 4-6.
15. "Summary Testimony," 3-6; *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 28, October 5, 6, 11, 1944; "Trial Transcript," 348-349, 368, 688-694, 106, 1000-1001.
16. Robert L. Allen, "Black Protest and Resistance in the Military During World War II: The Port Chicago 'Mutiny' of 1944," unpublished paper, San Francisco, 1978.
17. *California Eagle*, September 21, 1944; *People's World*, September 18, 1944.
18. Charles S. Johnson *et al.*, *The Negro Worker in San Francisco* (San Francisco, 1944), pp. 1-5; Miriam Roher, "Trouble Coming in California," *The New Republic*, January 21, 1946, pp. 84-85; Joseph James, "Race Relations on the Pacific Coast, San Francisco," *The Journal of Educational Sociology*, November, 1945, pp. 166-168.
19. James, "Race Relations," 167-175; "Fight Over Jim Crow," "Negro Problem Worries the Coast," "Ban Outlawed," *Business Week*, March 4, December 23, 1944, January 13, 1945.
20. *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 11, 29, 1944; *Baltimore Afro American*, October 21, 1944; *Pittsburg Courier*, October 28, 1944; *California Eagle*, October 19, 1944; *People's World*, October 17, 1944.
21. *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 18, 19, 1944; "Summary Testimony," 7-8.
22. "Trial Transcript," 1372-1435; *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 24, 25, 1944; *San Francisco News*, October 23-24.
23. "Summary Testimony," 8; *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Francisco Examiner*, October 25, 1944; *San Francisco News*, October 24, 1944.
24. "District Naval Staff Headquarters, Twelfth Naval Headquarters, 15 November, 1944," memo on microfilm, Naval History Center; *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 18-19, 1944; *New York Times*, November 19, 1944.
25. *Crisis*, November, 1944, pp. 344, 362; January, 1945, p. 20.
26. *Crisis*, April, 1945, p. 110; "Memorandum Brief for the Accused" in "Trial Transcript."
27. "Statement of Thurgood Marshall Esq., 3 Apr. 1945" in "Trial Transcript."
28. "Memorandum for Admiral Lowe 5 Feb. 1945;" "Ralph A. Bard to Commandant, 12th Naval District 17 May, 1945;" "Records of Proceedings in Revision;" "District Staff Headquarters, 12th Naval District" all on microfilm, Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C.; Murray, *Negro Handbook*, 349; Nelson, *Integration*, 80.
29. Nelson, *Integration*, 21, 47-49; Nichols, *Breakthrough*, 58-60; Reddick, "Negro During World War II," 217.
30. Nelson, *Integration*, 210; Reddick, "Negro During World War II," 214.
31. Lester B. Granger, "Racial Democracy, the Navy Way," *Common Ground*, Winter, 1947, pp. 61-66; Reddick, "Negro During World War II," 215-216.
32. "Secretary of Navy from Chief of Naval Personnel 8 Sept. 1945;" "Captain Stassen to the Secretary of Navy 15 Oct. 1945" memos on microfilm, Naval Historical Center.
33. *New York Times*, January 7-8, 1946; *Baltimore Afro American*, January 10, 1946; *Pittsburg Courier*, January 12, 1946.
34. Nelson, *Integration*, 21.
35. Reddick, "Negro During World War II," 218.
36. *People's World*, September 18, 1944.
37. Granger, "Racial Democracy," 67.



# Pages from the Past—

THE CALIFORNIA SILK WORM.—*SATURNIA CEAETHUS*.



## THE CALIFORNIA SILK-WORM.

For the discovery of a native silkworm in California, we are indebted to Dr. H. Behr, of this city, a German physician and naturalist, of high standing, both here and in Europe.

Experiments are now being made by several gentlemen to raise the caterpillars, and watch the development of the cocoons. The Society of Naturalists of California, are also engaged in this interesting enterprise.

Some time ago we had the pleasure of an introduction to Mr. E. Seyd, a gentleman who takes great interest in everything appertaining to the development of the vast resources of California, and who is now occupied in his experiments on the California silkworm, on quite an extensive scale. He has erected a glass house for their culture, in his garden, where from cocoons gathered from among the surrounding hills, are numerous butterflies, and upwards of ten thousand eggs, beside several hundred worms, now feeding upon the *ceanothus* bush, the shrub on which they feed.

This silkworm belongs to the class of the *Saturniæ*, and is named by the discoverer, *Saturnia-Ceanothus*. The *ceanothus* is an evergreen bush, growing in great abundance on nearly every hillside in California, and is easily cultivated from the seed, although it is rather difficult to transplant and preserve its life. Being an evergreen, very bushy and full of leaves, it is often cultivated in gardens, and cut into all sorts of ornamental shapes, for shades or hedges. On this plant the silkworm principally feeds; although it is also found upon the *rhamnus*, and several species of small oak.

The cocoon of this worm is very large, tough and durable. It is spun in August or September, but the butterflies do not make their appearance until March or April of the following year. These butterflies are large, and of a beautiful design, as can be seen in the engraving—their principal color being of a reddish brown, with white, black, blue and yellow spots and lines.

As soon as the chrysalis leaves the cocoon and becomes a butterfly, it seeks its companion of the opposite sex, and they never leave each other until the male dies, which is generally about three or four days, and the female follows the example of the male shortly afterwards; leaving from two to three hundred eggs, in little clusters, similar to those shown in the engraving. These are the size of life, and although small, very much resemble the chicken egg in shape and in the hardness of its shell, and which are fastened by the female to branches of the shrub by a brown gum-like substance.



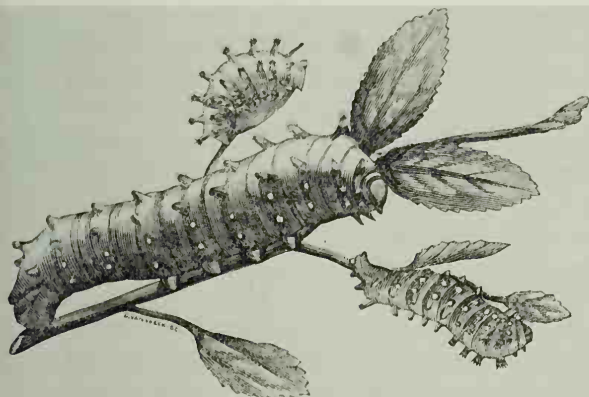
In from three to five weeks the caterpillars come out, and are about one-eighth of an inch in length, having a black body with tight yellow hairs upon it. A few hours after their birth they become altogether black, when they commence feeding. After a few days have elapsed they again begin to change, and show bright yellow spots upon the body.

When about fourteen days old they change their skins entirely, and in color, become of a bright golden yellow, with black hair; by degrees this color again changes to a greenish yellow; and, after a few days, upon their again changing their skin, the color changes to a beautiful green, with red, black and white spots.

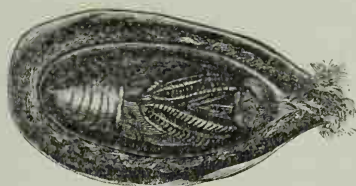
When the caterpillar is fully grown, they are from two to three inches long and about one and a half inches in circumference, and are very sluggish in their movements, and not very inviting in their appearance. They now begin to spin their cocoons, first the outside, and then the inside, which generally takes from three



## The California Silk Worm



FULL GROWN CATERPILLAR.



Chrysalis in Cocoon.

to five days. The cocoons, though large and firm in its outside texture has but few loose threads upon its surface which is not the case with the silkworms of the Bombyx novi species. The cocoons, too, of the latter are spun differently to the Saturnia ceanothus, or California species, inasmuch as they are spun vertically, and the Saturnia horizontally. The threads in both terminating at the top, or small end of the cocoon, leaving a closely fitted and elastic aperture through which the butterfly escapes with demolishing or injuring then cocoon, while the Bombyx mori either knows its way out or by the aid of a fluid exuding from its mouth destroys the fibre at the top, and thereby leaves the cocoon useless.

The manner in which the Saturnia ceanothus spins its cocoon may in some measure retard the successful winding of the silk, although it is a mathematical truth that if the worm spins a continued thread one way, we ought to be able to wind it off the other.

Mr. S. has succeeded in winding off parts

of cocoons but they being old gummy and dry, cannot be considered as a fair test of what can be done when the cocoons are fresh and new.

Some species of the Saturnia—who all spin the same way—have recently been discovered in Asia; and are just like ours, and the French have not only been successfully spinning those cocoons, but give a glowing description of the beauty, strength and durability of the silk, also they are not as large as ours.

The cultivation of the silkworm in California, is a subject of importance to our young State, and we hope that those gentlemen now engaged in such interesting ex-



Cocoon upon a branch of the Ceanothus.

periments, will, with the assistance of our Chinese population, be enabled to produce and manufacture native silk of such a quality and in such quantities, that it may become a source of profit, as it will be of pride, when the fair ladies of California rustle past us, clad in the beautiful folds of native California silk.

#### CALIFORNIA SHRUBBERY. THE CEANOTHUS.

It may not be generally known that there are no less than seventeen species of this most beautiful shrub known to botanists in California; twelve of these have been noticed and described, and five have yet to be. And although they grow most plentifully upon the coast, they extend from the foot hills to the height of six thousand feet above the sea, in the mountains of the Sierra Nevada.

The following list of the names and colors of this shrub, will no doubt be interesting to our readers:

Name.	Color.
CEANOTHUS, dentatus, . . . . .	deep blue.
" rigidus, . . . . .	do.
" papillosum, . . . . .	do.
" cuneatus, . . . . .	White.
" integerrimus, . . . . .	Yellow-white.
" incana, . . . . .	Lilac.
" oliganthus, . . . . .	Pale blue.
" thrysiflorus, . . . . .	do.
" divaricatus, . . . . .	do.
" hirsutus, . . . . .	Blue.
" verrucosus, . . . . .	do.
" prostratus, . . . . .	Pale lilac.
" sp., not named, . . . . .	White.
" sp., . . . . .	Blue.
" sp., . . . . .	Bluish purple.
" sp., . . . . .	White.
" sp., . . . . .	Blue.

## Reviews

Charles Wollenberg, *Reviews Editor*

*Karl Feichtmeir*

### The On-line Information Revolution in California

Research in under thirty seconds? Students of California history will hail the exciting, almost revolutionary research tool which is now available. High-speed computers to search subject files of bibliographic citations provide access to literature of almost any imaginable topic. The searching is conducted on a terminal similar to a typewriter, eliminating the necessity for a knowledge of computer processes. When the terminal is connected to one of several commercially operated central retrieval systems (large computers which provide this service), one has access to several hundred different subjects stored in computer memories called "databases." Any one of these databases can hold up to a million-and-a-half bibliographic citations to articles, books, and theses, plus newspapers and magazines, written on a given subject. The advantages of searching a database rather than its counterpart—printed abstracts and indexes—is that citations are located instantly and can be printed out on a terminal before the researcher's eyes. This almost magical immediacy is referred to as "on-line" or "computer-based" bibliographic retrieval. It was pioneered in California and is rapidly growing into a profitable worldwide business.

In 1954, at the Naval Ordnance Test Station in China Lake, California, what was probably the first computer system to search and retrieve bibliographical references was assembled. The advantages were dramatic: more citations could be stored in less space; more detailed indexing was facilitated, making possible better access; and speed and cost were improved over previous indexing systems, such as the card catalog or printed index.

By 1964, Lockheed Missiles and Space Company in Palo Alto, California, initiated research on a retrieval system to store citations and provide access to NASA's entire collection of 200,000 technical reports. To accomplish this feat, the system analysts at Lockheed devel-

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Karl Feichtmeir is the Manuscript Librarian of the California Historical Society Library.



oped an entirely new computer system. Basically, it made use of a larger memory and more sophisticated program which decreased the time the computer needed to locate specific citations. Another advantage over previous computer-based indexing systems was its ability to allow several users simultaneously to ask for and retrieve citations to literature indexed in the computer's memory.

Concurrently, another California firm, Systems Development Corporation located in Santa Monica, was testing and perfecting the first "nationwide" on-line retrieval network using 200,000 records obtained from thirteen government agencies (such as the FBI). The project was funded by a grant from the federal government, in part because law enforcement agencies were interested in getting information quickly. Terminals located throughout the country were connected by telephone or other communications lines to the central computer in Santa Monica. The system was sufficiently advanced to allow several dozen users to connect into the main computer and to ask and receive information. This breakthrough ushered in what many have termed the "on-line revolution." It marked the beginning of instant access to computer databases containing several hundred thousand items of information.

In 1968 Lockheed contracted with another government agency, the U.S. Office of Education, to provide on-line bibliographic access for books, periodicals, and papers at the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). The birth of the ERIC database allowed the inclusion and automatic indexing of recent literature citations into the existing databases. This "updating" potential eliminated the problem of re-alphabetizing and re-printing yearly which is inescapable with any printed abstracts and indexes. The addition of current literature into the database meant that everything was located in one file, unlike its printed counterpart wherein published supplements would not be indexed until the year following publication. This updating has proved invaluable

*This typical portable terminal is used for on-line bibliographic searching. It can be attached to any telephone, and it will print the database's citations on paper. The user simply dials the number of a commercial database vendor and enters a unique code number similar to a credit card number. The information print-out follows.*

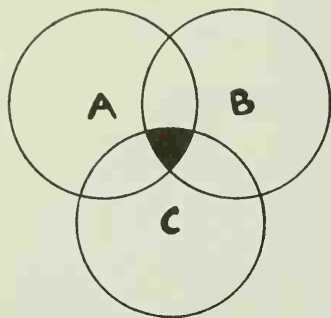


for researchers, particularly in the fields of medicine and science.

By the late sixties a number of on-line systems were being tested nationwide. But it was the two California companies, Lockheed and Systems Development Corporation, which first contracted with numerous governmental agencies to provide databases. By 1971 Lockheed was developing a computerized database for the National Agricultural Library as well as the National Technical Information Service. Systems Development Corporation meanwhile had contracted with the National Library of Medicine to put their holdings onto a database.

Until 1972 both companies were involved in creating these computerized indexes or databases to store the literature of governmental agencies, universities, and businesses. But in that year both companies independently decided to create their own commercial retrieval system by buying or leasing copies of existing databases, many of which they had helped to develop. The result

In the diagram, "A" represents those citations relating to history; "B" represents those relating to California; and "C" represents those relating to aviation. When the three terms are combined "on-line," the result is a listing of citations for literature on the history of aviation in California (as represented by the darkened area of the overlapping circles).



was a scramble to obtain the most comprehensive collection of databases on subjects which business and industry would pay to see. Other companies sprang up which did nothing but create databases to lease to these two growing California firms. Agricultural, engineering, and nuclear energy databases were developed. Despite the competition between Lockheed and Systems Development Corporation, both had plenty of clients who were eager to use their services. In fact, the only area where competition lagged was in pricing. Both charged very high rates calculated on the database used and the length of time the user's terminal was connected.

Finally, towards the end of 1977, a third, non-California database company, located in Schenectady, New York, began operation with the expressed purpose of forcing Lockheed and Systems Development Corporation to lower their prices. The California monopoly, as it had become known, was broken, and the rates charged to customers dropped, though not appreciably.

In 1978 three more companies entered the database vending market. One of these, owned by the New York Times Company, had finally developed databases for magazines and newspapers. Included are the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Los Angeles Times*, although the papers are indexed only as far back as 1972. Other vendors have seen the potential market for non-

technical, general interest databases, too, and are consequently developing additional databases relating to the social sciences and the humanities.

To date, approximately 170 different subjects are available on commercially vended databases—from history to science to government documents. The considerable, if slowly decreasing, expense of using on-line services, however, has forced users to prepare "search strategies" before connecting their terminal to an on-line retrieval vendor. Strategies involve locating key terms that relate to the subject to be searched. The terms are found in the thesaurus specifically developed for each database. Some databases, however, do not have thesauruses, and the searcher must make up his own terms. By using Boolean logic (see diagram) to connect terms, a skilled searcher can locate citations for extremely specific topics. Each printed citation usually includes the following: personal author, corporate author, document title, journal citation, keyword phrases, report number, language, and abstract.

Samples from a search utilizing the two available primary databases on history follow this text. This search was run for the CHS Library Director, Gary Kurutz, whose research interest is the history of aviation in California. The search was done by the General Reference Department at the University of California, Berkeley, and it took nineteen minutes and fifty-one seconds. The complete cost, including a printout of the citations, was \$47.00. While this is an exorbitant figure, the results of the search may justify the expense: twenty relevant citations were retrieved, none of which were previously known to the researcher who had spent one year investigating the literature on the history of aviation in California.

The possibilities for using on-line searching for historical or any other research purposes are limitless, despite the fact that most databases index retrospective literature dating back only to 1960 (exceptions are the databases for history abstracts and Comprehensive

Dissertation Abstracts). The expense of this kind of research presents problems, but it is continuing to drop toward an affordable level. Moreover, with the increased yearly costs of printed abstracts, many libraries may be forced to cancel their purchases and turn instead to on-line services. Reacting to this possibility, a number of California public and university libraries have already implemented an on-line search service.

Today, the proliferation of databases will amaze the old-school researcher. Universities and businesses are

creating their own, storing their records by utilizing the computer equipment they often already own. In fact many professional associations are indexing their journals onto databases and then leasing them to various database vendors. It should not be many years before a separate database is created for the subject of California history. This will surely index the numerous runs of important periodicals like the *Wasp*, *Argonaut*, *Sunset*, *Westways*, *Out West*, as well as the many journals which currently do not enjoy complete conventional indexing.

? T10/5/1-10

10/5/1

0372925 14A-02676

EDDIE NEHER-EARLY AIR MAIL PILOT.

Foote, Virginia.

Publ: Pacific Historian 1969 13(4): 63-71.

Eddie Neher lost his life flying the mail in 1927. Before that, however, he and his friend, Lou Foote, enjoyed some uproarious times barnstorming California in the early days of aviation. Describes several of the stunts these early pilots would execute. 3 photos, 3 notes.

F. I. Murphy

Identifiers: Air mail pilot ; Neher, Eddie ; Barnstorming ; California

10/5/2

0323600 13A-03374

FROM MOSCOW TO A COW PASTURE IN AMERICA.

Cole, Martin.

Publ: Am. West 1975 12(1): 10-13.

Narrates the July 1937 flight of three Russians from Moscow to California. The trans-polar flight established a new nonstop distance record.

D. L. Smith

Identifiers: Trans-polar flight (nonstop) ; Aeronautics ; USSR (Moscow) ; California

10/5/6

0277365 12A-06990

BIRDMEN OVER DOMINGUEZ HILL.

Ashkenazy, Irvin.

Publ: Westways 1975 67(1): 14-16, 71, 72.

History of the first air meet in the United States, at Dominguez Hill, California.

S

Identifiers: Airships ; California (Dominguez Hill) ; Air meet



## Book Reviews

### *A Gold Rush Voyage on the Bark Orion from Boston around Cape Horn to San Francisco, 1849-1850.*

Edited by Robert W. Wienpahl. (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1978. 298 pp. \$18.25.)

*Reviewed by David Hull, Chief Librarian of the National Maritime Museum in San Francisco and author of articles on maritime history and museum libraries.*

Reading an account of a sea voyage is like working in the garden. In intimate contact with nature, one finds that the sense of time passing recedes. Relaxation vies for the appraisal with boredom as one counts and recounts the descriptions of making and taking in sail, the longitude and latitude notes, and the entries, "Nothing of importance transpired today."

This work would have done well to have included a sail plan (on the back cover of the dust jacket, for instance, which is entirely blank and therefore wasted), for if the reader knows the sails, then different images of the bark will spring up in his mind as he reads the accounts of making and taking in sail. It is by that imagination and by following the vessel's progress on a chart (which in this work is very conveniently placed on the outer part of a foldout so that it can be placed handy at all times to the text) that an ineluctable sense of passage is produced. It is this sense of passage that carries the reader in the genre of passage accounts.

Couched in the passage are incidents, related and unrelated, of varying degrees of interest. The account of passage thereby becomes a microcosm. In this account, there is a "doctor" who deliberately poisons—nearly—the second mate and three men, and there are brigs and whalers and other barks and porpoise- and shark-fishing and adventures in Rio de Janeiro. Of particular interest in this work is the fact that four separate accounts—two are contemporary and two are recountings—of the same passage are drawn upon; the interest of each day's incidents is thereby multiplied by four varying points of view. There is also change within the chroniclers: Jenkins, at nineteen the youngest, begins by grimly reflecting upon "the trackless ocean, which we must expect to be our home for at least five or six months," but within a month he exults while rowing one of the bark's boats for exercise:

Never did my eyes set on so magnificent a spectacle as on our barque when we beheld her at the distance of a few hundred yards with no other object in view save the clear blue sky above our heads and

the blue waters beneath us, and we as it were a speck in comparison whilst her sails were slating loosely against the masts and she continually rising and falling with a grace which nothing can rival . . . I felt proud of my new home.

Editing is no mean task, for the weight of selection may be fully as present for the editor as it is for the composing writer, and Dr. Wienpahl has produced a very interesting work in the genre of passage accounts. He commendably has outlined in his Introduction the principles of his editing. My only criticism of the editing is that at the onset of the fourth chronicler—of whom Dr. Wienpahl did warn in the Introduction as being very garbled—the flow of reading is disrupted by the chronicler's report that he signed onto the *Urania*! What happened to the *Orion*? A simple editorial, "i.e., *Orion*" was in order.

But then, as soon as I figured out that all was well, I began to marvel; this fourth chronicler had the name of the vessel wrong, and a number of dates wrong as well—how did Dr. Wienpahl ever match this account with the *Orion*? Immersion is the answer. That matching is the measure of the editor's immersion in the subject of gold rush passages, for the events of the passage do match those of the *Orion* and the editor is certainly correct. His immersion is apparent also from footnotes that cite other passage accounts wherein a vessel speaks a vessel that *Orion* has spoken; that sort of information is not available in any library's catalog.

Dr. Wienpahl's scholarship is as exacting as his immersion is impressive, and his account of the gold rush shipping scene is the best summary I have seen anywhere. His description of the source journals would warm the heart of a descriptive bibliographer. He is himself a navigator—he completed the position reckonings for several entries (and he wrote the Introduction aboard his own vessel).

It is good that his supportive material includes a passenger and crew list, special attention to the backgrounds of chroniclers, an abstract log, the ownership record of *Orion*, and a bibliography. Most laudably, he includes a very good six-page index which treats subjects as well as names; the index is an adjunct indispensable in any historical subject, especially in the field of maritime history whose works so often even in modern times lack indexes.

The book is pleasingly designed and printed on attractive paper. In spite of the \$18.25 price, here is a book that belongs in at least every West Coast library with a history section. I also recommend it to the individual with an interest in sailing or in his roots on the west coast.

*As You Sow: Three Studies in the Social Consequences of Agribusiness.*

By Walter Goldschmidt. Foreword by Senator Gaylord Nelson. (Montclair, New Jersey: Allanheld, Osmun and Co., 1947. Reprint 1978. liv, 505 pp. \$16.50.)

*Reviewed by* Peter R. Decker, Assistant Professor of Policy Sciences and History, Duke University, and author of *Fortunes and Failures: White-Collar Mobility in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco (1978)*.

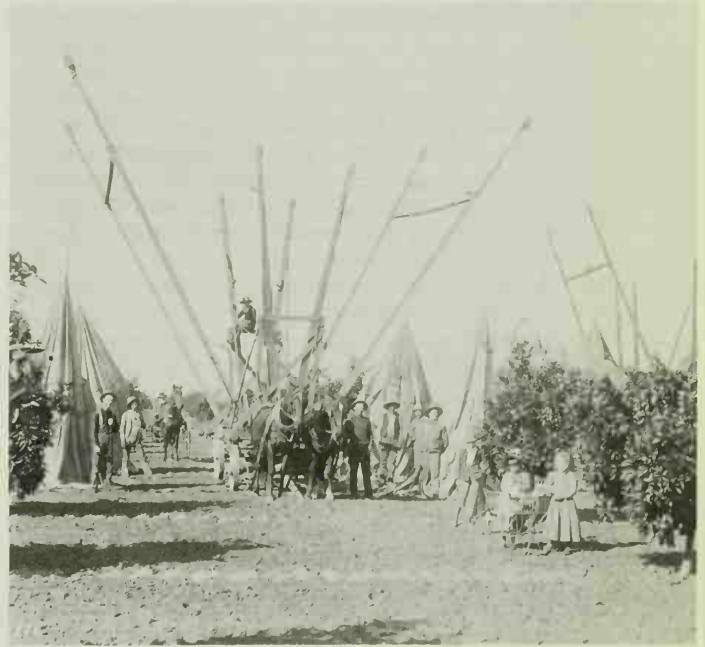
Approximately once every decade since the end of World War II, Congress becomes interested in the plight of small farmers in this country. Series of witnesses exclaim about the wonders of modern agriculture—higher yields with increased mechanization—while a few minority voices detail the social havoc of our agricultural policy. Always the most informed testimony to this latter view is that of Walter Goldschmidt, Professor of Anthropology and Psychiatry at the University of California at Los Angeles, whose research in the 1940s on the social effects of industrialized agribusiness in California has been brought together under one cover.

This new edition includes the classic title piece, plus "Agribusiness and the Rural Committee" which originally appeared in 1946 as a Committee Print of the Senate Small Business Committee. In addition, there is a new chapter which details the efforts of congress, business interests, academics, and the media to discredit Professor Goldschmidt's scholarship. A superb Introduction serves to place into a contemporary context the effects of corporate agriculture upon rural communities throughout the United States.

The first part of the book demonstrates, through a detailed examination of one community (Wasco, California), the social havoc wrought by industrialized agricultural production. With increased crop specialization and mechanization, the town becomes more dependent upon external utility companies, banks, and markets. Local autonomy is eroded, while within the town itself there is increased social differentiation and conflict.

Where large-scale and corporate agriculture develops, it follows not only that there are great differences in the level of control among the managerial group, but that a cadre of economically dependent laborers will emerge. From this there follows a system of social distinctions, with a powerful group and a relatively alienated and disaffected working class. The economically and socially advanced

*Specialty crops and big machines have long characterized California's agriculture. Here a work crew places fumigating tents over young orange trees in Southern California.*



group look outside the community for both their economic and social needs, so that both local business and social organizations wither. Increased power in the hands of a small sector tends to be self-reinforcing . . . unless measures are taken to counteract it.

In the second part of the book, two farming towns, Arvin and Dinuba, are compared with each other to support Goldschmidt's central thesis. The first town is characterized by large-scale industrial agriculture and a high degree of concentrated economic power. In Dinuba, farms are smaller, less capital-intensive, hence the community supports more local businesses, a higher average standard of living, more schools, and civic organizations. Where Arvin is more dependent upon decisions made external to the town, Dinuba possesses the internal resources to "provide the basis for a richer community life."

In the last section, where Goldschmidt details the efforts of agribusiness and their representatives to discredit his research, he documents "how knowledge gets suppressed and truth distorted, how bureaucracies are entered and destroyed, how national policies are subverted, and the character of our nation reshaped."

*Striking longshoremen and warehousemen  
on the San Francisco waterfront in 1934  
blocked rail shipments to Bay  
Area warehouses.*



The march grew initially from the longshoremen's need to protect their uptown flank. It soon burst these confines, though—involving the uptown shops, moving into outlying houses, rallying some 8,500 warehouse workers to its cause, becoming in fact a march inland. It stamped a clear imprint, still legible today, on Bay Area labor relations—and on the jobs and lives of thousands whom it touched.

Schwartz's book tells the reader in abundant detail how it all came about—more, I suspect, than any but the most esoteric student of labor might be interested in knowing. It's a useful contribution; it examines closely a period and a chain of events often overlooked, often underestimated. If its literary style is pedestrian, it walks at least on solid footings. But it isn't for the casual reader, nor the passerby simply curious about what went on, nor for the student in search of something of the quality of the time.

My problem with the book is my feeling that it bypasses the big picture in favor of what sometimes seemed endless i-dotting and t-crossing. I got no feel of the times. I got no sense of the anger or frustration that sometimes drove, often encouraged workers to organize, to strike, to fight back. I got no explanation of the real anger in the employers' drive to wipe out the rising unions or, failing that, to force into being "properly conducted" unions of Mr. Dooley's legendary sort: "No strikes, no rules, no contracts, no scales, hardly

This is an important book because Goldschmidt raises important questions about the social consequences of agribusiness. He argues convincingly against the economics of large-scale production units when he includes in his calculus the quality of people's lives, measured not in cash income but social relationships. By today's standards, Goldschmidt's methodology is, in part, outdated; also the book lacks analytical focus and depth. Nevertheless, this pioneer study stands virtually alone in its systematic critique of American industrial agriculture. From the perspective of a Jeffersonian democrat, he has raised some important questions, and his findings should command the attention of scholars and government officials whose "expertise" and policies have forced millions of small farmers off the land.

It is a sad commentary on the history profession that so little of our agricultural or, in fact, our social history today asks those questions which Professor Goldschmidt so thoroughly addressed some thirty years ago. The issues raised by *As You Sow* transcend California, for they affect not only a large segment of the American rural population but, more significantly, the future direction of all developing nations in the world today.

### *The March Inland: Origins of the ILWU Warehouse Division, 1934-1938.*

By Harvey Schwartz. (Los Angeles Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, 1978. xii, 262 pp. \$7.50.)

*Reviewed by David F. Selvin, labor journalist and historian  
whose writings include biographies of Samuel Gompers and  
Eugene Debs.*

The march inland in the late 1930s gave lasting shape and thrust to labor relations in the San Francisco Bay Area. It spurred unionization in the warehouses at a time when they were a strategic key to the area's economy. It encouraged organization of unions in businesses tangential to the warehouse industry. It helped implant the multi-employer pattern that became the hallmark of San Francisco bargaining. It gave fresh impetus to the mighty upsurge of union organization that marked the decade. It was, too, a fierce, determined, sometimes bitter, and decisive battle at a crucial moment.



any wages an' damn few members." I got no diagnosis of the contagion that spread the union idea from one warehouse to another, from workers in one Bay Area business to those in countless others. I got no feel of the surging dynamic that gave the march its strength and its meaning.

I may have fallen into a critic's trap: I may be unfairly criticizing Schwartz for not writing the book I think should have been written—instead of the book he chose to write. That's not my intent, but I cannot avoid the feeling—I hope it isn't nostalgia—that somehow much that is vital to a real understanding of the time has been overlooked. A big, fat, wide-angle lens, rather than a micro, would have shown more people's faces and fewer contract clauses. People's faces, I think, are what it was all about.

I add, too, that the book's drab design does no favor for its publisher or its author. It's a gussied-up, offset copy of a typed manuscript. But Governor Brown should be happy to learn that the Institute is getting \$7.50 for it.

*Suddenly San Francisco: The Early Years of an Instant City.*

By Charles Lockwood. (San Francisco: A California Living Book, 1978. 176 pp. \$9.95.)

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*Reviewed by Charles Wollenberg, Reviews Editor of California History magazine.*

If someone were to appoint me Chief Censor, my first act would be to ban publication of new books which take for granted San Francisco's unique historical experience as an "instant city." According to Charles Lockwood, "one of the best stories about San Francisco has yet to be fully told—the story of how San Francisco, within a few decades of the Gold Rush, became a city." I beg to differ. During just the past five years, at least five books have been published which emphasize that very story.

Perhaps it is unfair to single out *Suddenly San Francisco* for criticism, for the book has many excellent qualities. Lockwood presents an impressionistic survey of San Francisco growth and society between the Gold Rush and the 1906 earthquake, and in the process he touches on many fascinating topics. The book is well-written, attractively designed in an oversized paperback format, and contains a good col-

lection of historical photographs. In short, it is a work that San Franciscophiles will enjoy.

I do, however, question some of the author's emphases. He extensively covers the role of women as prostitutes but ignores the efforts of Jane Stanford and Phoebe Hearst to build the area's major universities and Kate Wiggin's innovations in primary education. Lockwood also largely ignores struggles between labor and capital and the fact that nineteenth-century San Francisco was a city of immigrants, with a large majority of the population either foreign-born or children of foreign-born parents. Finally, Lockwood perpetuates some myths that have little basis in fact: there is no evidence that Forty-niners sent their laundry to China or that Elizabeth Gordon made her daughter an alcoholic by lacing the child's food with demon rum.

But the major problem with this book is simply that the theme of San Francisco's emergence as an "instant city" already has been extensively covered in other recent works. No one would argue that the frantic Gold Rush experience did not influence the city's later history, but we need careful analyses of the extent of that influence. In particular, scholars should compare San Francisco's nineteenth-century development with that of midwestern and eastern cities, some of which grew far more rapidly than San Francisco after the 1850s. It is time to integrate the San Francisco story into the general history of urban growth in the United States.

*A Guide to Historic Places in Los Angeles County.*

Edited by Judson A. Grenier and others. Prepared under the auspices of the History Team of the City of Los Angeles American Revolution Bicentennial Committee. (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall-Hunt Publishing Company, 1978. 324 pp. \$4.95.)

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*Reviewed by John E. Baur, Professor of History at California State University, Northridge, and author of four books and many articles on California and the West.*

The destiny of this paperback volume is not to stand on a library shelf and gather dust, nor to catch one's passing glance on a coffee table, but to lie temporarily in a glove compartment before frequently fitting into the hand of a visitor to the

*Los Angeles County sightseers prepare to enjoy a tramride ascending Mt. Lowe.*

Los Angeles area's historic sites which it ably chronicles. Since pioneer days this region has been a sure subject for guidebooks and histories. Combining both roles, the present work follows the tradition of Rensch and Rensch's *Historic Spots of California*, Aubrey Drury's *California, An Intimate Guide*, and for its own area the Federal Writers publication composed in the Depression period.

Readers will find this slender tome practical in detailing routes to the more than four hundred historic sites listed, the hours they are open, facilities available, and fees, if any. Private residences, not open to the public, are also noted. Very much up to the moment, the guide warns that Proposition 13 may already be modifying some of the conditions stated! Suggestions on traffic conditions and neighborhood parking possibilities would have expanded this practical approach.

William Mason, Judson Grenier, Abraham Hoffman, and Richard G. Lillard have provided four well-balanced, chronological introductory chapters entitled: "Indians and Mexicans," "Rancho to Boomtown," "From Boom to Depression," and "Big-Time Growth and Consequences," which trace Los Angeles' main periods and set its historic sites in general perspective.

These places are catalogued within a dozen regional zones, each preceded with a rather smallish map on which the sites' assigned numbers are superimposed. As John W. Caughey states in his foreword, the choice of sites is representational. The History Team of the City of Los Angeles American Revolution Bicentennial with the Associated Historical Societies of Los Angeles County rightly deleted from an original list most of the places which were merely marked by plaques where historic buildings once stood, rather than disappoint visitors. Editors have also wisely selected excellent photographs of historic structures. And what a marvelous diversity resulted! Selections vary from San Gabriel Mission to the *Queen Mary*, with many excellent examples for tracing ethnic history, points of geographic interest, and every sort of style in Angeleno architecture. Occasionally the editors critically comment on the poor upkeep of some sites, for theirs is no sugar-coated promotional publication.

Some flaws do appear, but considering the compact wealth of factual information, the few misspellings seem inevitable. A sturdier cover is needed, for this guide will soon show the wear of heavy use by teachers, students, tourists, "Southland" buffs, and not a few historians. Needed also is a longer bibliography including several excellent monographs on par-



ticular eras—Cleland's treatment of the early American period and Dumke on the Boom—accompanied with brief critiques of each; mere book titles never tell enough.

By its nature this work will quickly become obsolete, requiring newer editions, which should cover more recent places of consequence. Along with its celebration of Los Angeles' remarkable past, this handbook makes sadly obvious how harshly "progress" has obliterated evidences of the last two centuries. This welcome compilation will help us honor that bicentennial two years hence.

*The Battle of Santa Clara.*

By Dorothy F. Regnery. (San Jose: Smith and McKay Printing Co., 1978. 154 pp. \$20.00.)

*Francisco Pacheco of Pacheco Pass.*

By Dr. Albert Shumate. (Stockton: University of the Pacific, 1977. 47 pp. \$4.50.)

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*Reviewed by Seonaid McArthur, Acting Director of the California History Center, De Anza College, Cupertino.*

*The Battle of Santa Clara* by Dorothy Regnery, thoroughly documented and printed in a handsome format, convincingly portrays the causes for and significance of the only resistance in Northern California during the American-Mexican War. The Santa Clara campaign, which involved 100 Californios and 100 US Marines, occurred from mid-December, 1846, to the first week of January, 1847. Regnery's detailed account of the battle clarifies the unique political climate in the north and offers a lesson in history about events equally important to those which surrounded the Southern California battle and Treaty of Cahuenga. Making use of previously unpublished sources, Regnery includes the account of the Treaty of Santa Clara in which the Californios were granted their rights and honor.

The volume carefully combines primary source documentation for the researcher-historian with narrative and beautifully executed illustrations for the discerning casual reader. Regnery has obviously made exhaustive efforts to locate every letter, military order or personal journal that might shed some light on the individuals participating in the conflict. One major oversight appears to be the barely recognizable use of sources in Spanish. The primary source texts in English are presented in their entirety, shedding light not only upon the intricate politics of the day, but also (primarily from the Anglo-Saxon viewpoint) the personalities that enmeshed themselves and instigated the conflict. In the author's words, "Some men were great, some men were pitifully weak and frightened while stalking like bullies, and others were selfish, domineering and grasping." Over half the book deals with the prelude to the battle and the role a few foreigners played in exploiting the local rancheros and turning the northern populace against the American conquerors. The actual battle of Santa Clara is documented through the words of the commanding officer, Captain Ward Marston,

and through illustrations, many of which are published here for the first time.

In another work of local history focusing on the southern reaches of the San Francisco Bay peninsula, Dr. Albert Shumate, in his volume *Francisco Pacheco of Pacheco Pass*, examines the life and times of a family that has left its mark on the region. As one drives today over the vast rolling hills surrounding Pacheco Pass and notes the transitions urbanization has brought to the area, it is refreshing to imagine the region as the thriving cattle ranch described by Shumate. The author's use of newspaper accounts of the era, family letters, and merchants' records from Monterey provides welcome information, specifically on how the ranchero family lived, their major items of trade, their thirst for land and political power, and the impact of the Gringo Gold-seeker upon the unsuspecting Californio. Because the Pacheco lands eventually included 150,000 acres, the family experienced extensive negotiations with the US government following statehood. Shumate's information on how the American Land Claims Commission affected this one family provides a clearer understanding of similar events which took place throughout the state.

*Francisco Pacheco of Pacheco Pass* is not a romanticized account of the Californio based on legend and artistic trappings, but a narrative filled with direct and concise information about the remarkable Pacheco family and their times. The book provides valuable information on an era we know too little about and tells the story of a Californio clan whose significance only begins to be recognized here.

*The Italians of San Francisco, 1850-1930.*

By Deanna Paoli Gumina. (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1978. 230 pp. \$7.95.)

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*Reviewed by Andrew Rolle, author of The American Italians (1972), The Immigrant Upraised (1968), and California: A History (1978). He is Cleland Professor of History, Occidental College, Los Angeles.*

Publication of this book coincides with the recent opening of a splendid new ethnic museum at North Beach which heavily features the contributions of San Francisco's Italians. Too



*San Francisco children line up with other Bank of America depositors on a Saturday morning in 1918 to take advantage of A. P. Giannini's savings plan for the young. The Saturday "open door" bank policy was a Giannini innovation of the time.*



graphically for the outside world. Their views give an added perspective to the local one. Gumina does utilize one of these accounts, also published in Italy, during 1881, by Giovanni del Ferro (although he too is not listed in the index).

Immigrants were not uniformly proud of their origins. Some wished to remain Italian and to recreate a way of life they had known in Italy. Others, like the banker A. P. Giannini and members of the DiMaggio and Alioto families, became closely associated with America's materialistic life patterns. However, the particular vibrancy and upward mobility of the San Francisco Italians makes their story a joy to read. There is relatively little of the depressing and down-trodden sense of defeat that eastern immigration historians have depicted.

In short, Gumina has done a fine archival job upon which later writers can build, bringing the story of this particular ethnic group up to the present.

many years have passed during which our minorities have languished in anonymity. This is the first systematic attempt to recapture the story of Italians at the Golden Gate. It is presented in a bilingual edition in pages running side-by-side.

The best local histories, ethnic or otherwise, need to establish a link outside a community, looking at the macrocosm beyond a microcosm. Although this particular volume utilizes local sources admirably, the author has paid no attention to histories written within the last ten years that contain insights about the Italian experience nationally. This valuable wider historiography, ideally, must interact with what local historians seek to describe. The result can be a fruitful synthesis. Tighter editorial supervision could have enhanced the scope of this first volume on so complicated a subject, also reducing, incidentally, the number of typographical errors and improving the index.

In her Introduction, Mrs. Gumina discusses the difficulties of piecing together a fragmented and disparate record. Her book "does not pretend to be a definitive account. . . ." Without disparaging the heavy spade work done by the author ("immigration history" is one of the most difficult of literary forms), this book has other built-in limitations. Its terminal date (1930), for example, would seem to exclude discussion of the fine Italian restaurants that have flourished in the city even before the past forty years. Surely mention of at least a few of these should have been made, for example the Fior d'Italia, which was founded long before 1930. One misses an entry for "restaurants" in the index (even though the last word in the book is "cuisine"). The author does, however, point out the Italian involvement in fishing, wine production, the theater, agriculture in general, and such trades as baking.

Among other gaps that come randomly to mind is the important record preserved by the photographer J. B. Monaco (1856-1938), whose work is so prominently displayed in the new North Beach Museum. One misses extended treatment of Italians associated with the life of the city, for example, of the famous Molinari family (sausage production, delicatessen, and, latterly, politics). The story of the great tenor Enrico Caruso's stay in San Francisco during the 1906 earthquake and fire years to be told fully. More could have been written about Leonetto Cipriani, the aristocratic patriot who recorded his stay in *Memorie della mia vita* (2 vols., Bologna, 1934). My own *The Immigrant Upraised* (1968) included a number of such travelers who visited the San Francisco Italian community and who described it

*Education of California's white and minority children in one classroom was the subject of this racist cartoon from the March, 1907, issue of the San Francisco Call.*

*The Education of Non-Whites in California, 1849-1970.*

By Irving G. Hendrick. (San Francisco: R & E Research Associates, 1977. ix, 165 pp. \$10.00.)

*Reviewed by Doris Fine, Ph.D. candidate in sociology and education at the University of California, Berkeley, and co-author of a forthcoming book on the impact of race on school policies in five Bay Area school districts.*

Histories of education in California generally fail to include the experiences of non-white children. Professor Hendrick's report therefore provides a much-needed description and analysis of the educational opportunities that existed for Indian, Mexican, Asian, Negro and other non-white children in California.

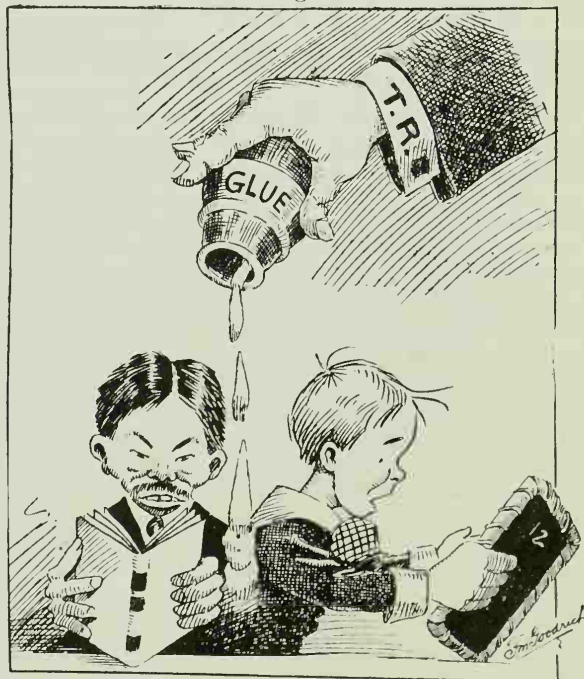
Needless to say, it is not a pleasant story. The liberal rhetoric of "liberty and justice for all" finds little validation in the facts of California school history. These liberal values failed to arouse the leadership or infuse the institutions of public education. On the contrary, the story of non-white education in California reveals the widespread existence of local prejudice against non-whites, and their exclusion, segregation, and isolation in public programs of education.

At one time or another, all non-whites were the victims of state and local discrimination and were deprived of equal opportunities. California, in mid-nineteenth century, was regarded by state leaders as the manifest destiny of white men. Social and economic opportunities such as schooling were withheld or only partially available to members of "inferior" or "foreign" races.

In addition to racial prejudice, the economic subjugation of non-white peoples was equally a factor behind the systematic exclusion and segregation of racial minority children: Indian children were captured and used as servants; Chinese were recruited for railroad construction and mining manpower; Mexicans provided the labor for California's agricultural production; and blacks were relegated to menial jobs unwanted by white workers.

Twentieth-century industrial progress brought little relief for non-whites. Progressive legislation, such as compulsory school attendance laws for Mexican migrant children, compounded hardships by restricting economic activities while failing to provide meaningful educational programs. In the

*The Big Stick*



interests of assimilation and Americanization, national policy toward the education of Indian children virtually liquidated the cultural heritage and traditions of these remarkable people. The doctrine of "separate but equal" governed whatever schooling was grudgingly made available to Asians, Mexicans, and Negroes.

Protests against the massive and cruel treatment afforded non-whites were sporadic and, until the 1960s, totally lacking in social support. Black-Americans were particularly persistent in challenging the inequity of their conditions. Regardless, schooling for blacks has remained largely segregated and of inferior quality. Currently, more than 150,000 black children, 37 percent of the state-wide total, are attending schools that are 90 percent or more black.

For many years a marginal matter, the education of non-white children in the public schools of California is now a central priority. Professor Hendrick's scholarly report suggests that the historic neglect and maltreatment of racial minorities may be a factor in the overall deterioration in quality that characterizes today's public schools.

*The San Francisco Irish, 1850-1976.*

Edited by James P. Walsh. (San Francisco: Irish Literary and Historical Society, 1978. 150 pp. \$15.00.)

*Reviewed by Father John B. McGloin, a long-time member of the History Department at the University of San Francisco.*

This volume, well edited by Professor Walsh of San Jose State University's History Department and published under the auspices of the San Francisco-based Irish Literary and Historical Society, represents a solid step forward in filling a need in San Francisco's history for an analysis of the important part which various ethnic groups have played in the city's past. Because the volume consists of ten different essays (three by Professor Walsh himself), it is difficult to assess the book in its entirety. Rather than therefore entering into a detailed recounting of the contents of each essay, let it only be said that students of the subject of the Irish will find much to stimulate and interest themselves in these pages.

After Professor Walsh's preface, Moses Rischin, correctly identified as an outstanding authority on ethnic origins and their influence, introduces the collection with a thoughtful treatment entitled "The Classical Ethnic." There follows a shrewd analysis of the "Irish in Early San Francisco" by Walsh, whose other two essays are entitled "Peter C. Yorke, San Francisco's Irishman Reconsidered" and "Machine Politics, Reform and San Francisco." Some of the author's observations and reflections here enter into the field of courteous disagreement, and the readers of the Walsh essays will disagree, perhaps, with some of his conclusions and opinions. This will be all to the good, of course. Many who read will be possessed, presumably, of their own views and prejudices, and stimulating dialogue could well result. What more could one hope for?

Other treatments included in these pages are William A. Bullough's "Chris Buckley and San Francisco: the Man and His City," and John Riordan's flattering appreciation of the role played by the prominent lawyer Garret McInerney, which is subtitled "The Pursuit of Success." Following is Roger Lotchin's "John Francis Neylan: San Francisco Irish Progressive." Going somewhat farther away than the local scene is George A. Colburn's "Father Coughlin and American Foreign Policy: an Irishman's Quest for Revenge." The reaction of local Irish to Coughlin is discussed herein. Of particular interest to this reviewer is Kevin Starr's close-in

analysis called "Jerry Brown: the Governor as Zen Jesuit." Starr's comments are far from the superficial, and, although written while Brown was still in the first year of his state rule, they contain some shrewd comments in support of the Starr contention that the four years spent by Brown as a Jesuit seminarian have had an effect upon the thinking and actions of the governor. The volume concludes with a well-written commentary by Seamus Breatnach entitled "The Difference Remains."

*The San Francisco Irish* is the kind of a book which one would try to read in one or two sittings with peril. So much is covered that time is needed to appreciate what is being contributed. It may perhaps be allowed to mention that the book would have been helped by a more careful proofreading, although of course typos invade many printed works. It is a distinct pleasure to record that the pages under review should always remain as a solid and therefore worthwhile contribution to the ethnic story in San Francisco.

All the photographs are from the CHS Library.



## California Check List

By Gary Kurutz, *Library Director*

The California Check List provides notice of publication of books, pamphlets, and monographs pertaining to the history of California. Readers knowing of recent (1978-79) publications which need additional publicity are requested to send the following bibliographical information to the compiler of this list: Author, title, location and name of publisher, date of publication, number of pages, price, and address where item can be purchased if not carried at general bookstores.

- Almeida, Carlos. *Portuguese immigrants: the centennial story of the Portuguese Union of the State of California*. San Leandro: Supreme Council of U. P. E. C., 1978. Publisher, 1120 East 14th St., San Leandro. \$6.50.
- Baer, Morley, Elizabeth Pomada, and Michael Larsen. *Painted ladies: San Francisco's resplendent Victorians*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1978. 80 pp. Publisher, 201 Park Ave., N. Y., N. Y. 10003. \$10.95.
- Bannon, John Francis. *Herbert Eugene Bolton: the historian and the man, 1870-1953*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1978. 396 pp. Publisher, P. O. Box 3398, Tucson, Arizona 85722. Cloth, \$15.00. Paper, \$8.95.
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The Magazine of the California Historical Society

summer 1979





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#### COVER:

In artist Charles Nahl's fascinatingly detailed version of the womanless world of the Forty-niners titled, "Sunday Morning in the Mines," some men read aloud, write letters home, wash tattered clothing, and smoke solitary pipefuls. Free from the tempering female hand, others brawl and carouse. For an assessment of how Argonauts viewed women and family, turn to the article beginning on page 128. *E. B. Crocker Art Gallery, Sacramento.*

# California History

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# WORKING TO PROSPERITY:

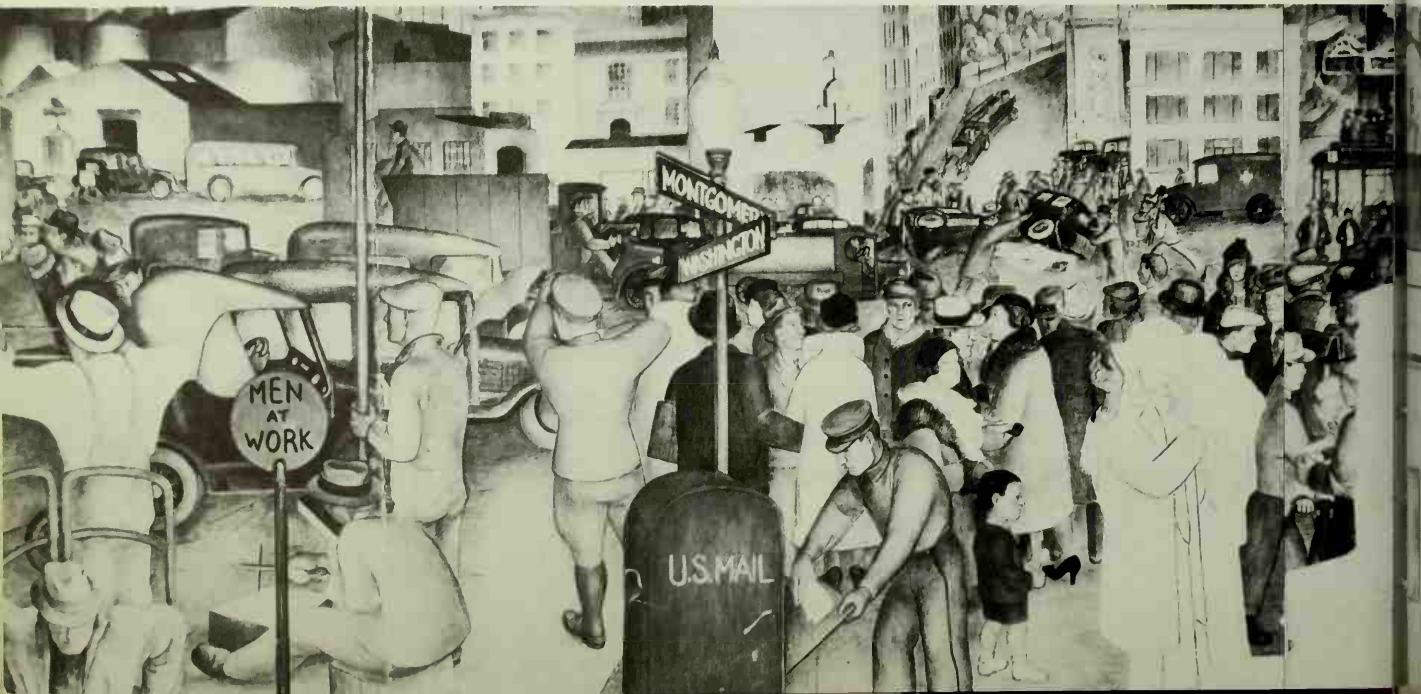
Announcing in 1933 that artists needed “to eat just like other people,” New Deal relief administrator Harry L. Hopkins gave his support to a groundbreaking plan to commission artists to produce public works of art.<sup>1</sup> Hopkins argued that “work relief,” as it was termed, was necessary because it not only provided otherwise jobless people with money to buy food, but also preserved their skills and restored their self-confidence.<sup>2</sup> In addition,

Steven Gelber, an Associate Professor of History at the University of Santa Clara, is interested in the social and cultural implications of the American economic system. He has written about business attitudes toward Negro employment and is doing research on the socio-economic origins of baseball.

Research for this article was partially funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. An earlier version was presented to the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians at St. Louis in 1976.

work relief brought the government something in return for its money—unlike the more traditional “dole” or cash handout. In the midst of the greatest depression in American history, then, the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt committed itself to the idea that artists, no less than other Americans, deserved the opportunity to use their particular abilities in government employment until the private sector could once more provide them with a living.

California artists responded to the federally supported art projects by covering the state—from Eureka in the north to Calexico in the south—with murals that celebrated the same values the New Dealers were seeking to preserve. Libraries, court houses, post offices and schools came alive with the color and images of the American people. These New Deal artists, like the president and





# California's New Deal Murals

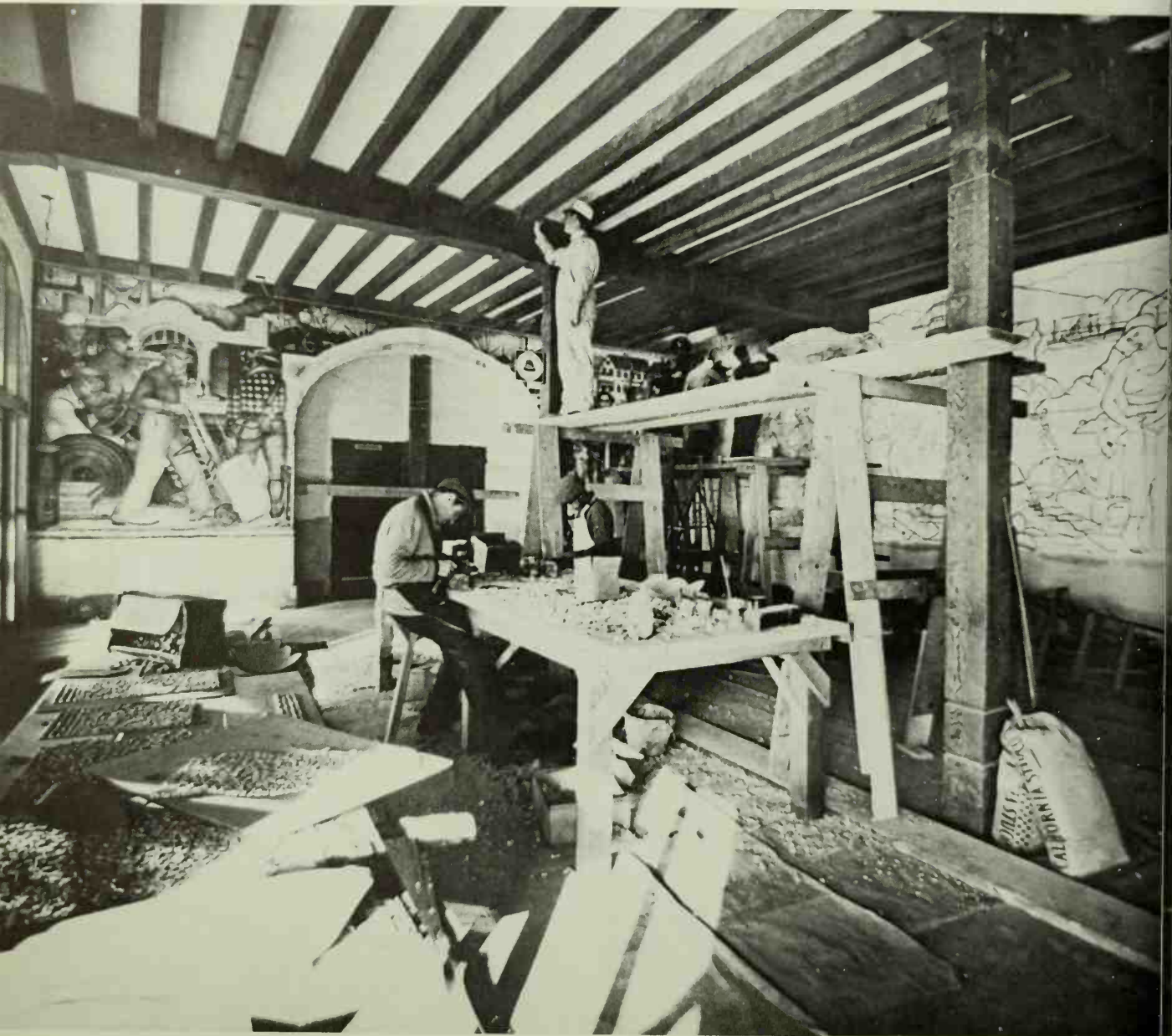
his administration, carried deep faith in the traditional American values of democracy and private enterprise. Despite the criticisms in the press to the contrary, the vast majority of the artists rejected Marxist revolutionary solutions to the nation's problems, and their images accordingly emphasized that work rather than political action would bring a return to prosperity. This is not to say that all California artists were politically conservative. As supporters of New Deal programs, most were strong liberals who applauded efforts by the federal government to alleviate the gross suffering caused by the country's economic collapse. Theirs was a commitment to change, it was revealed, but to change that would restore healthy social and economic conditions in America, not revolutionary change that would create a radically new society.

More than 200 artists painted government-sponsored murals in California during the New Deal years. Most of them were young, and many entered the government projects directly from art schools where they had been influenced by a wide variety of historical styles. Although both the individual styles of the mature painters and the historical influences on the younger ones are readily recognized in the murals, it is the uniformity of both form and content that most impress the contemporary viewer. With extraordinarily rare exceptions, the artists painted the same kinds of people doing the same kinds of things, and personal variations in style rarely carried their murals beyond a middle ground between academic traditionalism and modernism. While artists had to please local patrons, and common sense demanded some relation between a mural's subject matter and the



OVERLEAF: Victor Arnautoff's fresco Metropolitan Life in San Francisco's Coit Tower is typical of many New Deal murals in its depiction of everyday life in the 1930s. No overt signs of economic depression and social disruption mar the scene.

The Beach Chalet on San Francisco's Great Highway contains some of the finest examples of New Deal art in the state. Artisans in this picture are executing mosaics designed by Primo Cardo; in the background Lucien Labandt paints a mural of city scenes. The Beach Chalet also contains a carved magnolia-wood stair railing with a marine life theme by Michael von Meyer.



place where it appeared, local differences proved less important than the similarities. No matter which federal agency sponsored it, no matter where it was painted, no matter whether it was a mural, easel painting, or print, California's New Deal art reflected the shared values of the artists and the New Deal administration.

Because of their belief in the underlying strength of American institutions, California's New Deal artists readily adapted their art to the requirements of the government's various art projects. Both the federal art bureaucrats and the artists started from the same set of assumptions and proceeded toward the same artistic goals. Both sought American subjects rendered in an American style for the American people. Conflicts among the government, the local audience, and the artists rarely occurred because all three groups knew what they liked. They liked the "American Scene."

The art movement known as the "American Scene" dominated the depression decade that was inevitably linked with the New Deal art projects. Surveying federally sponsored art in early 1938, California art critic Alfred Neumeyer concluded that "an overwhelming majority of the artists naively accept that most obvious and perhaps the most natural of all possible subject matter—the daily life of America." Displeased by the fact that "in every city you can now see how cows are milked," he asked, "What terrible spiritual poverty must we confess to our successors, if we believe that American life means nothing but canned food production or the banking business."<sup>3</sup> But Neumeyer missed the entire point of New Deal art. The prosaic subjects did not reflect spiritual poverty. Quite the contrary, they were to represent the spiritual strength of the nation—its people and their work. Accordingly, people and work constituted the iconographic essence of the American Scene art movement.

The experimental modernism of cubism, futurism, and the like had been on the decline in America for more than a decade by the time of the great stock market crash

of late 1929.<sup>4</sup> Even before Roosevelt took office, art critics had begun hailing the emergence of the new American Scene school of art.<sup>5</sup> American Scene artists shunned the artistic "isms" of Paris and sought to paint American subjects in a representational style. Edward Bruce, head of the first government art program, recognized that the popular American Scene movement was totally compatible with his own belief in the value of bringing art out of museums to people, and in 1934 he officially designated "the American Scene" as the appropriate subject matter for all Public Works of Art Project (PWAP) art.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the federal government did not originate and impose the American Scene on its artists, but rather commissioned the style and subject from a pre-existing trend. As PWAP, the first government art agency, observed in 1934, "The American artist had just gone through a period of eclecticism, but, a few years before the beginning of the project he turned his mind away from theorizing for its own sake toward the life and people of his own country."<sup>7</sup>

Within the American Scene, art historians identify two sub-groups of artists, Regionalists and Social Realists. Largely an iconographic distinction, Regionalists painted rural America, and Social Realists painted urban America. Both groups shunned the more abstract elements of European modernism, but the Regionalists went much further than the Social Realists in purging from their work any hint of non-objective styles. They painted little else but their native Midwest, making Regionalism "an art of rural and country views, apolitical in content, often nostalgic in spirit and usually un-mindful of the effects of the Depression."<sup>8</sup>

Social Realists on the other hand were explicit critics of "the system," or at least of the effects of the economic system on people. They saw the depression as an inescapable reality, and they neither retreated to the cornfed myths of the bucolic Midwest nor glorified workers in the tradition of Socialist Realism. "Despite ample [radical] rhetoric," notes art historian Matthew





Baigell, Social Realists “portrayed their subjects as sad, drab, and spiritually depressed individuals rather than as heroic workers bursting with the kind of vitality capable of building a new society.”<sup>9</sup>

Most Social Realists painted in New York, which was the only state that had more extensive art projects than California. There they joined Regionalists to present a full spectrum of contrasting views of America in the thirties.<sup>10</sup> In California, however, the Regionalists’ outlook totally eclipsed that of the Social Realists. Social Realism was an expression of disenchantment with the economic system that California artists did not share. Men and women who had found a place on the government payroll and who were far removed from both the cultural and political ferment of New York had little reason to upset the status quo. “On the whole the western projects were more naive,” observed Federal Art Project (FAP) administrator Joseph Danysh in a recent interview. “You could feel the cultural greenhorn quality. On the whole you found them trying harder, and on the whole you found much less of a politically social consciousness.” Danysh attributed the difference to the fact

that New York “had a very, very strong Communist element” that was missing in the Far West.<sup>11</sup>

In California, New Deal artists accepted Regionalism, urbanized it where necessary, and applied its uniquely American perspective to the people, places, and history of their state. Theirs was an art of affirmative nationalism that found value in even the most everyday situations and things. The ability of California artists to find beauty in common objects drew notice from as far away as Boston, where in 1934 the *Christian Science Monitor* praised the artists who wove “such prosaic things as post office boxes, crates of vegetables, a ticker tape apparatus, factory buildings, and even an ash can into a poetic, if slightly grim, whole.”<sup>12</sup> Both artists and critics gloried in the fact that native artists were painting native subjects. Writing in 1937 about the work of San Diego sculptor Donal Hord, Stanton Macdonald-Wright boasted that Hord “has never been abroad, nor has he studied under the influence of foreign masters; his work represents in a marvelous way what the American artist is capable of doing—uninfluenced and untaught by over-seas dictates.”<sup>13</sup>

*In the Modesto Post Office, Ray Boynton painted the quintessential Jeffersonian yeoman couple surrounded by the earth's bounties and the fruits of their labor—key images in the depression artists' search for stability.*

The return to figurative art was particularly welcomed by the culturally isolated California artists, few of whom had ever accepted modern art and were pleased to find the pendulum of national taste swinging back in their direction. According to surrealist artist Reuben Kadish, who was also an administrator for the Federal Art Project (FAP) in San Francisco, California art was generally “mediocre and insipid.” The entire state, argued Kadish, was “saturated with provincialism.” The galleries would not show, the museums and patrons would not buy, and the critics would not praise anything that was not representational.<sup>14</sup> Fortunately for California artists, the American Scene made provincialism a virtue.<sup>15</sup>

In the 1930s most segments of American society seemed able to agree that American Scene art was appropriate for the era. The public liked it because they could easily understand it. California artists liked it because it was not oriented toward Europe. Government administrators liked it because it supported rather than challenged New Deal values. Thus, while painting for the government imposed certain limits on what was acceptable art, most California artists had already imposed the same restrictions on themselves.

**M**urals in public buildings provided the artists with the most natural medium for expressing their American Scene/New Deal ideas. The new art was not only to be by and about Americans but also for Americans, and both artists and administrators agreed that art should be democratically accessible to the people rather than restricted to the salons of the rich.<sup>16</sup> Most artists seem to have viewed wall painting as an interesting and legitimate alternative to easel work, particularly because murals were a way of returning to the public the art that it was financing. Artists rarely attributed any great philosophical implications to the mural programs, but accepted them as projects that would enliven public places with



*Donal Hord's granite statue of a pioneer woman with a water jar stands outside the county administration building in San Diego. This WPA-FAP sculpture was criticized after its unveiling in 1939 because the figure looked “too Mexican.” Hord defended himself by proving that the model for “Guardian of the Water” was an Anglo woman.*

art which reflected the spirit of the sponsors, the artists, and the viewers. Unlike their East Coast colleagues who unsuccessfully plumped for a permanent federal art program, most Californians appear to have accepted the projects as temporary. Only two project officials, Joseph Danysh in Northern California and Stanton Macdonald-Wright in Southern California, supported the position of *Los Angeles Times* critic Arthur Millier who denounced the private market as an "interpretation of individualism which conceived of society primarily as an arena of commercial exploitation."<sup>17</sup> Danysh criticized easel paintings as "created by the isolated artist in his traditional attic and purchased, if at all, by a wealthy collector to be hoarded as an investment,"<sup>18</sup> and Macdonald-Wright eagerly welcomed "a picture that, due to the new social consciousness, is not a collector's item, but one that harks back to a day in which decoration was publicly displayed on walls and thus became the property of all who were able to benefit by its inspiration."<sup>19</sup>

Little historical precedent existed for the upsurge of mural painting in the early thirties. America had no strong tradition of mural decoration in public buildings, and painters from the American Academy at Rome had dominated what little mural painting was done in the years prior to the New Deal. The School of Rome was academic, but according to one depression-era critic, it was "the academy of a particularly strangled, debased and flat archaisticism—the dilution of models already diluted."<sup>20</sup> Unable to use the sectarian symbols of Christianity, academic muralists had attempted to replace them with symbols of civic virtue, but, observed the same critic, the images were "as devoid of real meaning as the ideas which they attempted to convey."<sup>21</sup> Reflecting this despair with American mural painting, Nelson Rockefeller and Lincoln Kirstein's catalog to a 1932 exhibition of mural designs at New York's Museum of Modern Art dismissed most existing American murals as unimportant and urged American artists to follow the lead of the Mexican muralists.<sup>22</sup>

Nowhere was Kirstein's advice more closely followed than in California. The influence of the Mexican muralist Diego Rivera was particularly pronounced in the works of many of the state's artists. With David Alfaro Siqueiros and José Clemente Orozco, Rivera had revived the almost lost technique of fresco, or painting with watercolors on wet plaster, in his murals of the early 1920s, and the idea of painting on the walls of buildings soon attracted the attention of United States artists. Maxine Albro, Clifford Wight, Marion Simpson, Bernard Zakheim, and Victor Arnautoff, all prominent California New Deal muralists, had worked with Rivera either in Mexico or in California, where he executed several commissions.<sup>23</sup> Rivera's government-sponsored Mexican murals, his highly decorative style, and his use of themes relating to the common people provided an irresistible model for California artists seeking to develop their own folk-nationalist style.

The influence of the leftist Mexican painter on New Deal art in California has given it an unjustified reputation for political radicalism, however.<sup>24</sup> With few exceptions California artists accepted the body of Rivera's art and rejected its soul—its revolutionary message.<sup>25</sup> Despite occasional confrontations and the ever-present spirit of Rivera, New Deal art in California was overwhelmingly noncontroversial. Rather than painting Marxist sentiments into their murals, the New Deal artists expressed an indigenous cultural nationalism which emphasized the strengths of American society both in the past and in the present. It is one of the great ironies of the federal art projects that their painters affirmed traditional American values in the visual style of a Mexican Marxist.

Three of the men who studied with the master muralist, however, shared his politics as well as his style. They worked together on San Francisco's Coit Tower, the first major achievement of the initial PWAP art project in California. As a result of this project, artists Victor Arnautoff, Bernard Zakheim, and Clifford Wight, along





*Maxine Albro, one of the many California artists who studied with the Mexican muralist, Diego Rivera, specialized in mosaics which the federal art administrators considered particularly appropriate for the state because of its Mediterranean climate. This photograph shows technician Primo Caredio and Albro setting marble tesserae (tiles) over a doorway at what was San Francisco State Teachers College.*

*This mosaic mural in Los Angeles' Edison Junior High School by internationally famous artist Stanton Macdonald-Wright used individually shaped tiles to convey different textures.*





A longshoremen's union picket line protested the covering in 1948 of a section of Anton Refregier's mural in the Rincon Annex Post Office. The controversial panel depicted the 1934 general strike in San Francisco.

with John Langley Howard, who had not studied with Rivera, managed at the outset of the New Deal to impart a lasting radical flavor to federally supported art. Although some twenty-five artists painted murals in the cylindrical tower on Telegraph Hill, it was the four artists' criticisms of American society that attracted the public's attention.

Arnautoff, a well known radical who eventually left the United States to return to his native Soviet Union, included two left-wing periodicals—*The Masses*<sup>26</sup> and *The Daily Worker*—in the news kiosk featured in his mural entitled "Metropolitan Life."<sup>27</sup> Although the mural depicted a prosperous scene, its benign mood was disturbed by an automobile accident and by a well-dressed businessman being relieved of his wallet at gun point.<sup>28</sup> In his "California Industrial Scenes," John Langley Howard included a group of striking miners, one of whom holds a copy of the radical paper, *The Western Worker*.<sup>29</sup> In another part of his mural, Howard made an even stronger statement which juxtaposed a new hydroelectric plant with an angry-faced unemployed couple forced to wash their clothes and pan for gold in the river below the dam. So that no one missed the point, Howard added a group of chauffeur-driven rich folk who gape in amusement near the poor people's tent. Finally, Bernard Zakheim's library scene showed a man pulling a copy of Karl Marx's *Capital* off a book

shelf, while others read newspapers featuring headlines critical of the Hoover administration and fascism in Europe.<sup>30</sup>

The political statements made in the murals by Arnautoff, Howard, and Zakheim aroused considerable public opposition but were allowed to survive. Clifford Wight's hammer and sickle, the communist symbol which appeared in a series of medallions illustrating the range of political philosophies existing in America, did not. The San Francisco Parks Commission, the agency which administered the tower, concluded that American philosophies did not range that far left on the political spectrum and summarily locked the tower until the offending symbol was chipped from the wall.<sup>31</sup>

The era of federal art in California closed as it began—with a fight over radical imagery in murals. In 1943, New Yorker Anton Refregier received a commission to paint the "History of San Francisco" in the Rincon Annex Post Office in San Francisco. The year was the last year of federal art sponsorship, and the murals themselves were not painted until after World War II. No longer feeling compelled to illustrate how hard work could end the economic depression, Refregier instead showed the past with all its blemishes, including vigilantes, anti-Chinese riots, and the waterfront strike of 1934.<sup>32</sup>

In 1953 during the McCarthy period, Congress held





*In the original version of Anton Refregier's depiction of the 1934 waterfront strike, the central figure was a recognizable likeness of strike leader Harry Bridges. The artist made the final figure anonymous in hopes of avoiding controversy. He failed.*



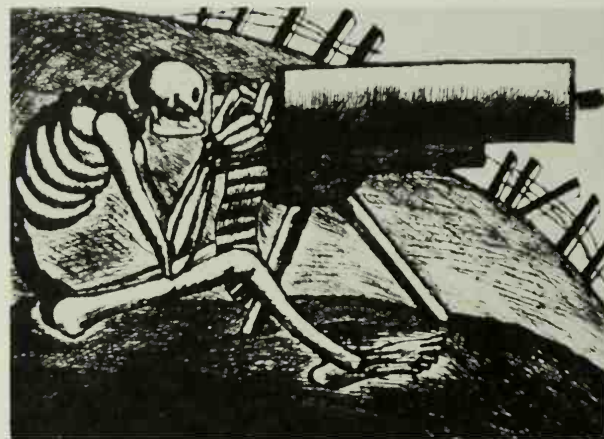
*Although the overall impression of Victor Arnautoff's mural in Coit Tower is benign, the artist alluded to social problems by including images of an automobile accident, a holdup, and radical political newspapers.*



*The powerful anti-war message of The Last Enemy, a print by Edward Hagedorn, reflects the isolationist foreign policy of depression America, but its stark calaveras style sharply contrasts with the American Scene realism of most New Deal art.*

hearings to determine if these offending murals in the San Francisco post office should be removed. Testifying for removal, a spokesman for the American Legion complained that "the murals do not reflect the romantic and inspiring history of California, and on the other hand tend to ridicule and slander the State and its pioneers. . . . These murals are not a matter of beauty or inspiration. They are depressing."<sup>33</sup>

Ironically, this statement by an anti-communist conservative could easily have been uttered by most California New Deal artists who painted fifteen years earlier. With only the very few exceptions noted above, California artists did not paint "depressing" murals during the Great Depression. They painted romantic and inspiring historical scenes because they looked to America's history as a source of strength in the battle with pressing contemporary problems.<sup>34</sup> Accordingly, they refrained from painting images of contemporary problems because they believed that art should be inspiring for people. Having faith that the New Deal would revive the system that had operated so well in the past, they preferred to paint the world as it should be or as it should have been, not as it was.



Art Program (TRAP) and the Federal Art Program (FAP) of the Works Projects Administration. In addition to these relief programs, the Treasury Department commissioned art in federal buildings through its Section of Painting and Sculpture (Section). Section artists were hired purely on merit and did not have to pass a financial means test.<sup>35</sup> PWAP, TRAP, and the Section seem to have reflected the aesthetic values of Treasury Department administrator Edward Bruce who favored the American Scene.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, the director of the FAP, Holger Cahill, administered with much looser reins.<sup>37</sup> Interestingly, the greater freedom enjoyed by FAP artists seems unreflected in their work. Murals painted under Bruce's guidelines or under Cahill's policy of benign neglect were remarkably similar.

Artists hired on all projects except the Section also produced easel paintings and prints. A study of this non-mural art—which by its form is less public in nature—provides some opportunity to measure the extent to which the murals reflected the artists' personal values as well as the demands of federal officials.

Generally, easel art produced for the PWAP and TRAP followed the American Scene line laid down by Edward Bruce.<sup>38</sup> Artists who worked on the FAP, however, had no mark to toe. They were free to paint what-

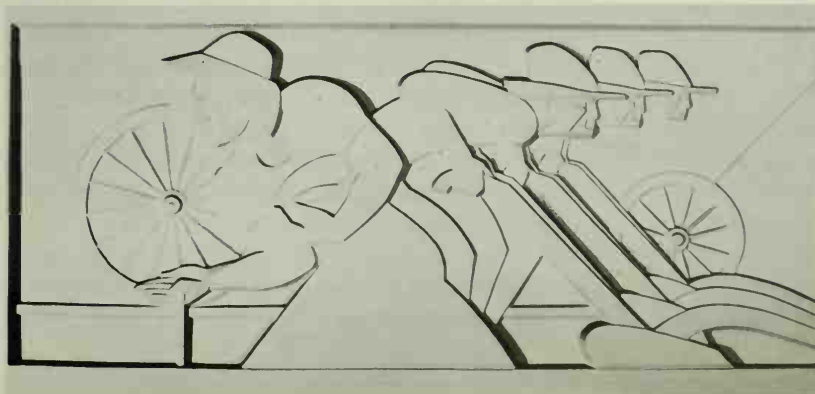
**T**he Coit Tower incident at the beginning of the New Deal and the Rincon Annex controversy at the end bracketed a decade during which four major (and one minor) government art programs covered California's walls with visions of liberal inspiration rather than radical anger. Although the public applied the generic term "WPA" to all federally sponsored art, the Roosevelt administration in fact created an administrative nightmare of five, sometimes overlapping, arts projects. Beginning in the fall of 1933, the government began subsidizing unemployed artists with the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP). After the agency's demise in 1934, it was followed by the State Emergency Relief Administration (SERA) and then in 1935 by the Treasury Relief



TOP LEFT: Bernard Zakheim was one of four artists who included radical political commentary in their Coit Tower murals. In Zakheim's library scene, one patron pulls down a volume by Karl Marx, while others read newspapers with headlines expressing Zakheim's views.



ABOVE: Painted in 1937, this mural by Reuben Kadish at San Francisco State Teachers College is an extremely rare example of surrealism in New Deal art. Although the fresco is now bisected by a wall, it has fared better than many school murals which were destroyed when the buildings were made earthquake-proof.



LEFT: This stylized 1937 cast-stone relief in the Santa Barbara Post Office by William O. Atkinson shows farmers plowing and farmers' wives sowing seeds. A companion relief features Indians as aggressive enemies and religious converts.





ever they liked in whatever style they preferred, and there were also many more artists associated with the FAP. Despite the large number of works produced, however, very little of the FAP easel art remains. Most was destroyed during World War II when warehouse storage space was needed by the armed forces.<sup>39</sup> What remains are those easel paintings which were accepted by public institutions. Having thus passed the test of public taste and entered museums, it is not surprising that most of these pieces resemble the murals both in subject and style.<sup>40</sup> But there is reason to believe that even the paintings which were never hung in galleries conformed to the same pattern. For example, the easel works of San Jose's Herman Volz, the only California artist who managed to purloin his paintings back from the FAP, show the same preoccupation with American Scene subjects as do the murals.<sup>41</sup>

Despite the rarity of New Deal easel paintings, com-

parison can be made based on the period's mural art and the extant "portable" art contained in the California Museum of Art print collection. Stored in the Oakland Museum, this collection of more than 850 prints by almost 300 artists contains an excellent cross-sampling of lithographs, etchings, and wood engravings made by artists from California and other states.<sup>42</sup> Allowing for individual stylistic variations, review of this important source indicates that the prints are as similar and homogeneous as the murals. An occasional example of "modernist" work appears in the collection, such as Helen Lundeborg's post-Surrealist "Table, Door and Books," or Edward Hagedorn's anti-war series of *calaveras*, which use skeletons to comment on social issues. But Arthur Murphy's critically acclaimed lithographs of the Bay Bridge are much more typical.<sup>43</sup> These finely executed prints of muscular men and structural steel convey as well as any mural the New Deal theme of prosperity



*Unemployed workers sit on the curb of Charles Kassler's mural in Beverly Hills, as others line up at the WPA paymaster's office. Neither the government nor the local residents protested this rare pictorial admission of depression unemployment problems.*

through work.<sup>44</sup> New Dealers by choice not coercion, and willing if de facto spokesmen for the administration, mural and easel artists employed on all four arts projects expressed their optimistic faith in America in conventional and prosperous images.

Even the lone mural effort in the entire state of California that showed a group of obviously unemployed men was painted not to criticize but to underscore the virtues of the New Deal.<sup>45</sup> Although Charles Kassler's series of lunettes in the Beverly Hills Post Office might at first appear to have been an isolated example of radical iconography, Kassler was in fact a moderate New Deal Democrat who wished to depict the "administration's effort to solve the unemployment problem."<sup>46</sup> In the first lunette of his series, Kassler painted artists like himself working on a federal art project. In the second mural he showed them lined up at the paymaster's window, and finally he painted them being "met by their dear ones who help them buy with this money the necessities of life for which they have been sorely in need." The unemployed men shown sitting on the curb in front of the pay windows, Kassler explained, were merely a visual device to point up the benefits of the work programs.

Kassler chose the Public Works Administration as his theme for a number of reasons, in part because he felt himself to have "a very vital part in the project," which, he believed, was saving the American way of life. The "extremely American" PWA subject, said Kassler, is "a matter of historical record" obviously worth artistic attention. Even the painters depicted in the mural were shown working on a mural of bison, a "truly American scene," while several sculptors carved a statue group entitled "Abundance" that Kassler described as "distinctly representative of our national resources."<sup>47</sup>

Not a word of objection came from Washington about the content of the Kassler murals, although several Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP) personnel questioned some elements of his composition, especially his

crowding of figures.<sup>48</sup> Kassler responded that people did in fact crowd around paymasters' windows and that he was trying to convey a sense of the crowd's "human joy in being paid for their work."<sup>49</sup> As an artist Kassler was not painting unemployment and the collapse of the American system, then, but working people returning to a fully functioning society. In a 1937 letter to a federal official, Kassler confidently predicted that work projects would revitalize the free-market economy through "more employment, more money circulated, greater consumption, larger profits, happier people."<sup>50</sup>

Kassler's dramatic paeon to the New Deal was unique in California federal art, but his commitment to the Roosevelt administration was shared by most artists. "We were all very ardent New Dealers," recalled Edward Biberman, a Los Angeles artist, "and when we found [New Deal policies] reflected in the art programs we were even more enthusiastic."<sup>51</sup> Lorser Feitelson, Los Angeles artist and FAP administrator, remembered that most artists "saw Roosevelt as . . . the leader of the coming civilization."<sup>52</sup> This is hardly surprising, considering that the government was employing them to continue in their art, for which they were naturally grateful. "You couldn't sell paintings, nobody was buying pictures, what were we to do?" asked San Diego painter Belle Baranceanu. Finding a job on the FAP, Baranceanu remembers, meant a "chance to do your own thing. . . . I voted for Roosevelt because he had made it possible for this to come about."<sup>53</sup>

Baranceanu's pragmatic political commitment to New Deal liberalism was typical of California's artists. After an inspection tour of the West in 1937, TRAP administrator Cecil Jones reported that western artists were not "demanding assistance from the government, but only asking for a chance to earn a decent living."<sup>54</sup> Section staffer Bernard Reufberg noted that California artists frequently expressed their appreciation for the "extreme kindness" shown to them by the Section. "This should be exceedingly gratifying when one realizes that



*Director of the Southern California Federal Art Project Stanton Macdonald-Wright observes Los Angeles artist Helen Lundeborg, who is preparing a mural cartoon. The unidentified mural was probably part of a series of historical scenes in the Los Angeles Hall of Records that has been destroyed.*



*New Deal nationalism manifested itself in the ever-present symbol of the state, the American eagle.*

it comes from a class of people who are supposed to be in the majority 'leftists,' " but, concluded Reufberg, "I have never found them to be so."<sup>55</sup> Mill Valley sculptor Richard O'Hanlon remembered a wide gap between the minority of political activists and the majority of artists. O'Hanlon recalled that whenever he and his wife went to meetings or parties with the radicals, "art never came up, and this was a very boring thing for me."<sup>56</sup>

To some extent the artists appear to have endorsed the popular view that a little suffering hones the fine edge of creativity, and they were reluctant to blame society for their plight. Sculptor Jacques Schnier, who held an engineering degree from Stanford, was by choice "living and working in one room and living from hand to mouth." "It was something of my own doing, and I couldn't see how you could blame society for not making life smoother."<sup>57</sup>

**A**lthough most artists retreated from political activism and rejected art as an appropriate medium for expressing partisan ideology, most nevertheless believed that their art should make a social statement. Los Angeles artist Henri de Kruif articulated the belief that artists should play a social role without producing obvious political propaganda. Impressed with the PWAP, in 1934 DeKruif wrote an article calling upon the government to institute a more permanent program of support for the arts. Many artists, he urged, would welcome an opportunity to paint "public works intended to visualize the aims, ideals, and achievements of the New World. Such works would rise above the sinister plane of pragmatic propaganda and put it to shame." In defining "American ideals, past, present and future," as the proper themes of federally supported art, De Kruif argued that merely repairing "the breaches in our economic and social security" was not enough. People also need symbols

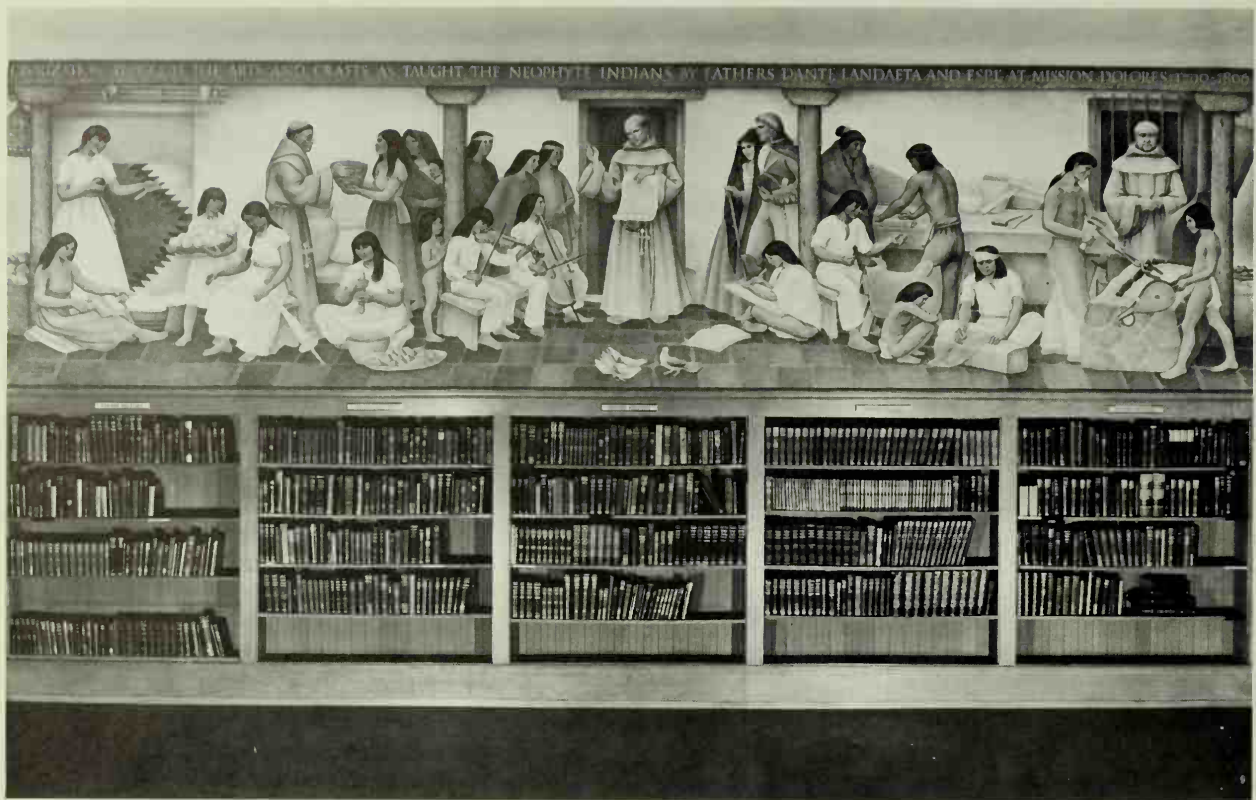
"akin to religion," he reflected. Recognizing that the words and actions of President Roosevelt were "forging new symbols to add to the old," he concluded, "If these symbols take form in the art of our own best craftsmen, the people will respond perpetually to their meaning."<sup>58</sup>

Optimistic and affirmative, the specific message of the art of the thirties is not immediately evident to today's viewer. Iconographically the most obvious image of New Deal nationalism was the symbol of the state, the American eagle. Shown with its wings spread and frequently perched on a fasces, the eagle, a Roman symbol of strength, belligerently proclaims the power of the nation.<sup>59</sup> New Deal artists frequently gave their eagles a somewhat faceted and modern appearance, thus rendering an image from the past in an appropriate style for the depression "moderne" buildings on which they usually perched.

Traditionally, artists have used images of single allegorical figures and national heroes to personify abstract ideas and patriotic values. When California artists depicted allegorical figures, if at all, they often combined them with the heroes of history. Thus, "The Law" by sculptor Archibald Garner in the Los Angeles Federal Building was not only Americanized by a quotation from Abraham Lincoln on the tablet carried by the figure, but it was paired with a James Hansen statue of Lincoln standing in the same lobby. Similarly, a half-nude embodiment of the firmament in San Francisco's George Washington High School was surrounded by thirteen stars representing the original colonies and by 1600 square feet of mural images depicting the life of George Washington.<sup>60</sup>

Eagles, allegorical figures, and heroes are the familiar symbols of national pride, but they rarely appeared in California's WPA murals. Instead, whole scenes were endowed with a greater symbolic meaning, and the allegorical nature of many New Deal murals was reflected in the startling anonymity of the figures, which are archetypes rather than individuals.<sup>61</sup> These general-





ized figures engaged in the application of American values were meant to serve as moral encouragement for the public. By illustrating American values in scenes of everyday life, both past and present, artists sought to make the ideals immediately relevant to average people who might not understand more elevated symbols like heroes and allegorical figures.

The history which appears in the murals by California artists does not reflect a full spectrum of historical events, but rather those aspects which served the artists' didactic purposes. The "search for a usable American past" was a widespread cultural phenomenon in the 1930s, and intellectuals of every discipline looked backward to find solutions to contemporary problems.<sup>62</sup> Since work and struggle against adversity were values held in high esteem, artists used history to illustrate how goals could be reached through sacrifice and hard work. Commenting on Victor Arnautoff's George Washington High School murals, *San Francisco Chronicle* critic Alfred Frankenstein praised the artist for not painting a "prissy, Parson Weemsish" Washington, but the "granite, laconic, human being who fought a nation into

existence on the edge of a wilderness against the odds of nature and of man."<sup>63</sup>

Reflecting the artists' search for special values, pre-Columbian Indian societies received short shrift in most New Deal murals. Native American culture, if shown at all, only prefaced the arrival of European civilization. California history seemingly began with the arrival of the Franciscan missionaries who were repeatedly shown instructing obedient Indians in spiritual and material affairs. Willingly receiving the benefits of the superior European culture, the Indians helped mural viewers feel secure in their values, despite hard economic times, and proud of their treatment of Native Americans.<sup>64</sup> Indians who refused to accept the white man's civilization accordingly were rendered as obstacles to be overcome: William Atkinson's Indians in Santa Barbara interfered with the US mail service, Anton Refregier's Indians in San Francisco's Rincon Annex Post Office attacked California-bound settlers, and the flying arrow of Primo Caredio's Indian in San Francisco's Beach Chalet curiously pointed the way to the men's room and menaced its vulnerable occupants.<sup>65</sup>

*Edith Hamlin's tempera mural for Mission High School in San Francisco depicted arts and crafts at Mission Dolores in the Spanish period.*

*Bruce Ariss' Monterey High School mural perpetuated the California myth of farmers living and working on the land.*



California's half-century interlude of Spanish colonial culture before the establishment of Yankee civilization proved particularly popular with New Deal artists who clearly delighted in the romantic Californio lifestyle. Dashing vaqueros, fiestas replete with beautiful señoritas and strumming guitars, and bull and bear fights all appear in the public art of the thirties.<sup>66</sup> But nobody in the artists' colonial California worked for a living, and a society which played rather than worked could not endure. Hence, as the artists saw it, the Catholic Californios were destroyed by their carefree style of life in an implicit warning to those depression victims who sought easy answers to life's problems.

The artists' Anglo pioneers, on the other hand, may have had less fun than the Californios, but their hard work in the gold fields and on the land was shown as responsible for establishing a permanent Yankee culture in the state. The hardworking Anglo was most often depicted as a farmer because the pioneer farmer was akin to the mythical Jeffersonian yeoman who lived a pure life close to the soil and to God.<sup>67</sup> Although California had very few small family farms, the image of the family

farmer bringing prosperity through the honest sweat of his brow was so potent that it appeared in countless art works in both urban and rural areas.<sup>68</sup>

A mural painted by Bruce Ariss for Monterey High School revealed the full range of California farm images. In an interesting inversion of the eastern seaboard experience, a white priest teaches the Indians how to plant corn, which they make into tortillas. Behind the Indians a Californio couple harvests corn and grapes before a tile-roofed barn. To the right of an allegorical figure representing fruitfulness, an Anglo couple loads vegetables into their truck in front of a wooden barn. In a rare injection of historical reality, a dark-skinned artichoke picker completes the mural.<sup>69</sup>

By the time of the New Deal, most of California's land was controlled by giant corporate farms using large numbers of agricultural laborers—Carey McWilliams' "factories in the field"<sup>70</sup>—but New Deal artists chose to ignore the unhappy realities captured in the photographs of the Farm Security Administration and focus on the corporate farms as efficient work places offering employment.<sup>71</sup> In Ventura and Vacaville, in San Diego and



*Lyla Harcoff's farm workers team with machines to reap the harvest in this lunette in the Santa Ynez Valley High School.*



*Far healthier and stronger than farmworkers captured in photographs from this period, Lew Keller's grape pickers in the St. Helena Post Office nevertheless seem to be working more strenuously than most agricultural workers shown in New Deal murals.*



*One of the series of portraits by radical artist Clifford Wight in Coit Tower, Steel Worker breathes strength, confidence, and responsibility.*

San Francisco, the muralists' healthy, well-fed workers routinely reap the bounty of the land.<sup>72</sup> Maxine Albro's Coit Tower flower picker could hardly be happier as she harvests calla lilies while dressed in a pearl necklace and lace-trimmed dress.<sup>73</sup> Only Lew Keller's grape pickers in the St. Helena Post Office and Henrietta Shore's field hands in Santa Cruz look as though they might be unhappy with their jobs.<sup>74</sup>

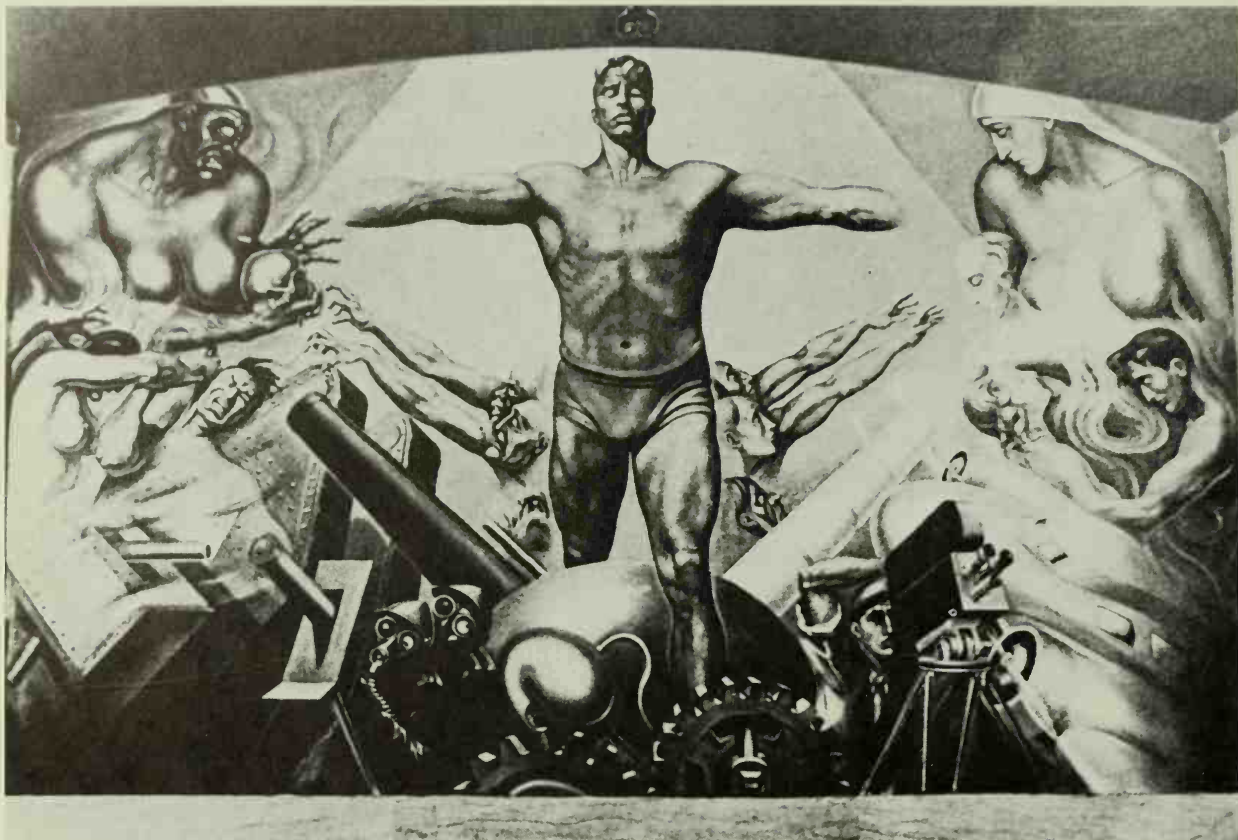
The peculiarly benign images of farm laborers, the state's poorest workers, reflected the artists' basic commitment to private employment. So did their industrial workers. Whether packing cheese, meat, or fruit, factory workers were depicted as sharing in the same bountiful economy. In fact the artists seemed less interested in the workers *per se* than in the thriving industrial system which combined men and machines. Neither dominated the New Deal industrial murals; the two worked together harmoniously to produce wealth. Workers were routinely shown as an anonymous but unexploited part of the fundamental economic strength of the American system, and Clifford Wight's gently smiling steelworker on the walls of Coit Tower epitomizes the apparent contentment of the vast majority of blue collar workers who people California's murals.<sup>75</sup>

Artists rarely painted white collar employees and professionals—although the artists themselves were part of white collar work projects. They chose instead to focus their attention on the “common people.” Predictably, the artists' occasional scientists, doctors, dentists, and lawyers combine with a few teachers and surveyors, even bankers and stockbrokers, to work for, not against, the interests of the masses. Only the radical artists' murals in Coit Tower, and the almost invisible downward line on the “Stock Averages” chart in George Harris' mural “Banking and Law” in the same building, imply anything but the most positive assessment of both business and management.<sup>76</sup>

The democratic cultural nationalism of the New Deal outlook shared by the administrators, artists, and public



precluded most conflicts over mural subjects and style. Yet artists could not always be sure that their vision of the American scene would be acceptable to federal officials and local popular taste. Before Joseph Danyslh became one of the most important administrators of the FAP in the West, he addressed himself to the question of conflicting expectations: “All I had to do,” he wrote, “was to find myself a wall and paint the American scene. I was tempted to do some slums, but was afraid they'd be too American for them; I thought of a design with machines, but, after all, America has no monopoly on the machine; I thought of a social satire, but then the



inmates of the building might object; and, as for the rest of it—workmen, tools, cityscapes, farmers, subways—those had all been done to death.”<sup>77</sup>

The limitations which Danysh raised in 1934 were actually embraced by New Deal artists during the heyday of the projects. How else, they questioned, could they produce art of maximum usefulness both to the state and to the people? Certainly there were limitations, observed San Francisco artist Lucien Labaudt, but Michelangelo, Fra Angelico, and de la Francesca had also worked under limitations. “Limitation forces one to think and therefore to create,” he reflected. “If we understand our role as Government workers, our duty is to serve the Government. By conforming ourselves to the program, our contributions in public buildings must be understood by the people at large.”<sup>78</sup>

The only serious dispute that arose between a muralist and his local patrons in Southern California instructively defines the artistic limits which most New Deal artists readily accepted. In 1934, the adult students of the Frank

Wiggins Trade School in Los Angeles raised \$700 to commission a mural by New York artist Leo Katz who was spending two years on the West Coast. The students liked the finished work, but the Los Angeles School Board did not.<sup>79</sup>

Although Katz painted three panels, it was only the central section, “Youth Arisen,” that provoked the board. The painting showed a blind youth, modestly clad in a bathing suit, striding forward with outstretched arms. At his feet were the implements of science and industry. Rising from the tools at his right were the misuses of technology and at his left the benefits. Each group was topped by a bare-breasted woman, one representing compassionate motherhood and the other, snarling and clutching a skull which dripped coins, personifying greed. Below, a woman surrounded by the tools of war stabbed a man in the neck. Balancing them were a pair of lovers and the instruments of learning and consumer technology.

School board members pronounced the mural

*The bare-breasted women and violence of  
Leo Katz' mural at Los Angeles' Frank  
Wiggins Trade School upset so many  
people that the mural was removed  
from the wall.*

"ghastly," "horrible," and "grotesque," and apparently objected to the female nudity. (Katz repeatedly vowed he would never put his figures—or at least his female figures—in "BVDs.") Because Katz refused to modify the central panel in any way, the school board removed it from the wall in 1935, and the two flanking panels followed four years later.<sup>80</sup>

Katz claimed to be no radical, and he praised the New Deal for offering America "the grandest opportunity ever given in the history of the world to enjoy an age of construction through art."<sup>81</sup> His mural was intended as a constructive statement against violence and greed, he said, and it was the kind of art demanded by the young generation which asked that "the artist not to be flattering but to tell life as it is."<sup>82</sup> But Katz ran afoul of the older generations' opposition to scenes of sex and violence. Like the Coit Tower radicals who had offended the public's values, Katz had offended its sensibility, and he paid just as dearly for his boldness.

The Katz incident illustrates the occasional problem encountered by artists even when they had artistic carte blanche by Washington.<sup>83</sup> Administrators and artists working in the field needed to be sensitive to local taste, both because they wanted to speak to the local people and because they needed local support for their projects. The Section and TRAP decorated federally owned buildings and were thereby insulated from public reaction, but FAP, like the PWAP, worked in local public buildings. Not only did the people who controlled these buildings provide the wall space to the artists, but they also paid the cost of the artists' materials. (The FAP covered only the artists' wages.) Thus, FAP artists felt pressure to share the values of their patrons—the local citizens.

FAP administrator Joseph Danysh remembers that most communities wanted scenes of "pioneers trudging across the plains. And so we gave them pictures of pioneers."<sup>84</sup> But as long as they were allowed sufficient freedom to interpret the images, most artists on the

federal projects were more than willing to paint murals that bolstered local pride.<sup>85</sup> According to Glen Wessels, who headed the FAP in Northern California, the purpose of project art was "to catch whatever spirit of progress there was in the community and celebrate that. In other words, to take the optimistic side and celebrate it with a monumental work of art." Wessels reflected further: "You could criticize the United States, of course. There were a lot of mistakes being made; but, nevertheless, there were some good things, and those were the things that made the best subject matter for monumental art."<sup>86</sup>

While FAP artists were tied to local patrons, men and women who painted for the Section of Painting and Sculpture had to keep in mind the kind of art favored by the Treasury Department. All Section artworks had to meet the standards of a panel of artistic judges in Washington, and artists quickly learned that if they wanted more commissions they would have to "paint Section."<sup>87</sup> As with FAP murals, local taste also had to be considered, and if the postmaster or community complained loudly enough, Washington would even demand changes in a design it had previously approved. Arizona artist Lew Davis, for example, designed a mural for the post office at Los Banos, California, that included a group of mounted Indians. Local historians objected that Los Banos had no mounted Indians, so Davis obligingly transformed them into vaqueros.<sup>88</sup>

It is natural but incorrect to assume that radical artists felt restricted by government supervision. Administrators of both the FAP and Treasury Department projects were New Dealers who looked kindly upon socially relevant American Scene imagery so long as it did not contain explicitly radical symbolism. The New Deal, after all, was a reform program directed in part to meet-

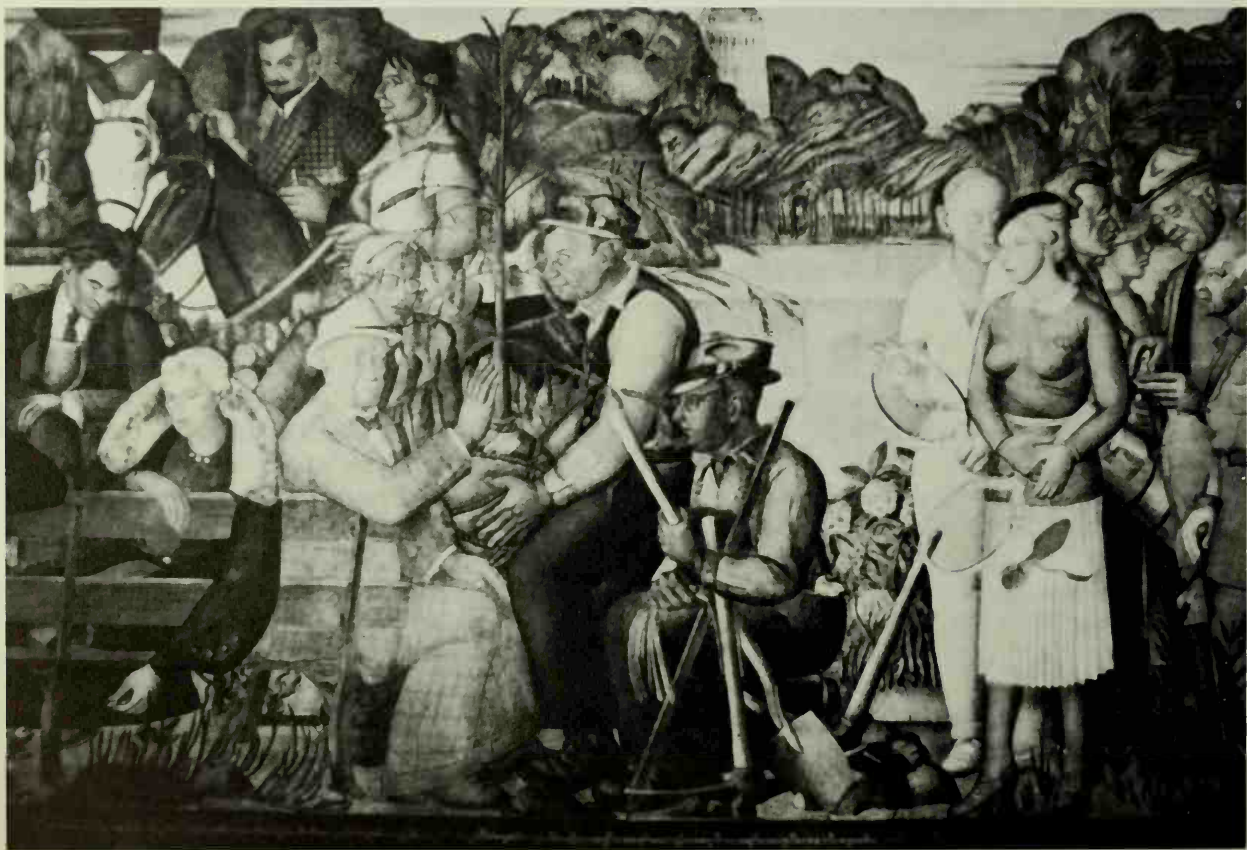
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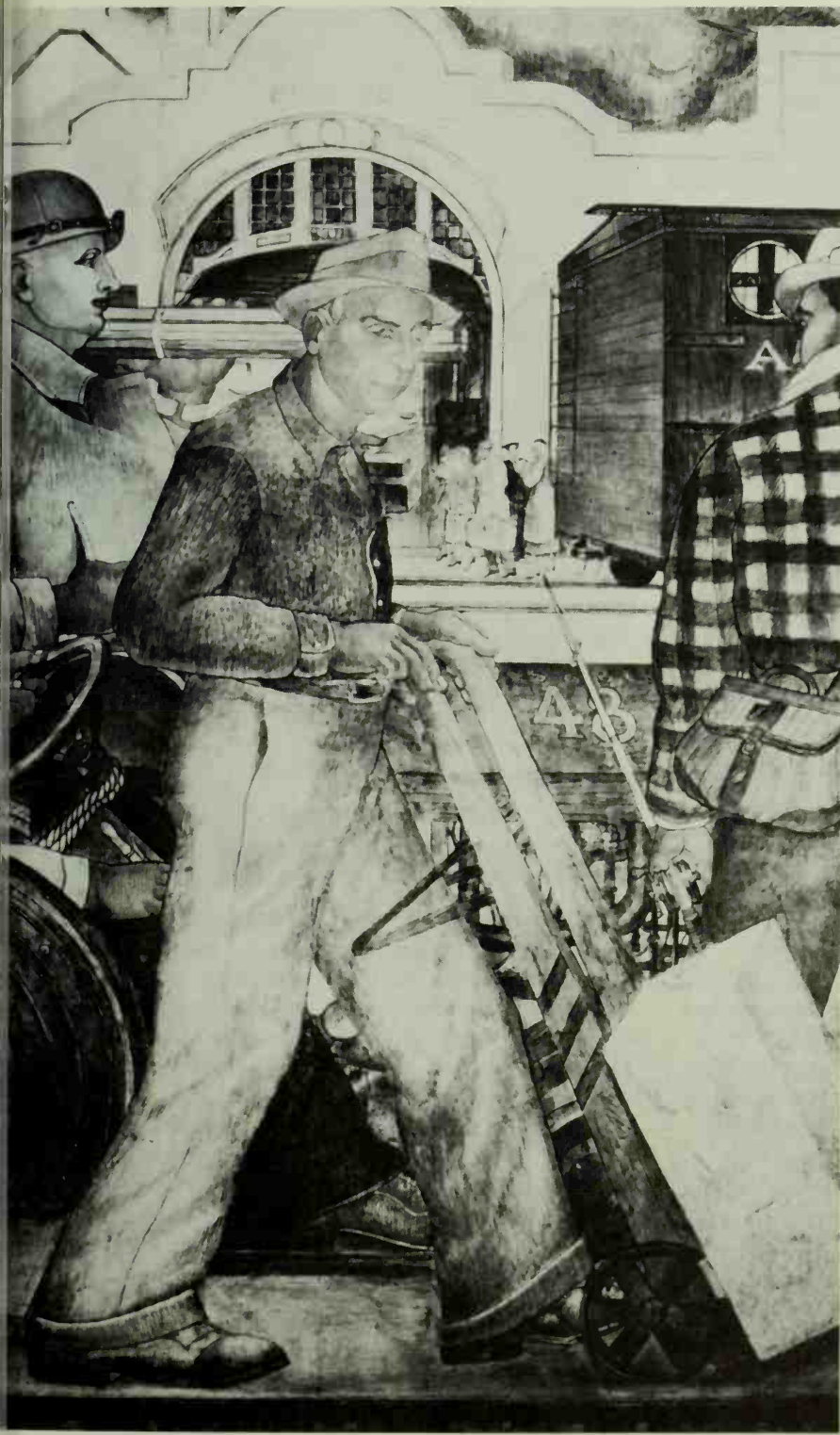




Two cowboy-costumed children play at the marina in Lucien Labaudt's San Francisco Beach Chalet mural. Covering the four walls of this huge room, the mural ignores the economic depression except for a tiny WPA project sign buried in the background of one of the scenes.

Lucien Labaudt's fresco in the San Francisco Beach Chalet includes portraits of a number of San Francisco artists and city and art project officials. Sculptor Benny Bufano rides the dark horse, while the man on the white horse is Joseph Danysh, a California Federal Art Project official and thus the artist's patron.





*This embarcadero dock worker in Lucien Labandt's Beach Chalet mural is traditionally identified as Harry Bridges, head of the San Francisco longshore union. No hard evidence confirms the model's identity.*

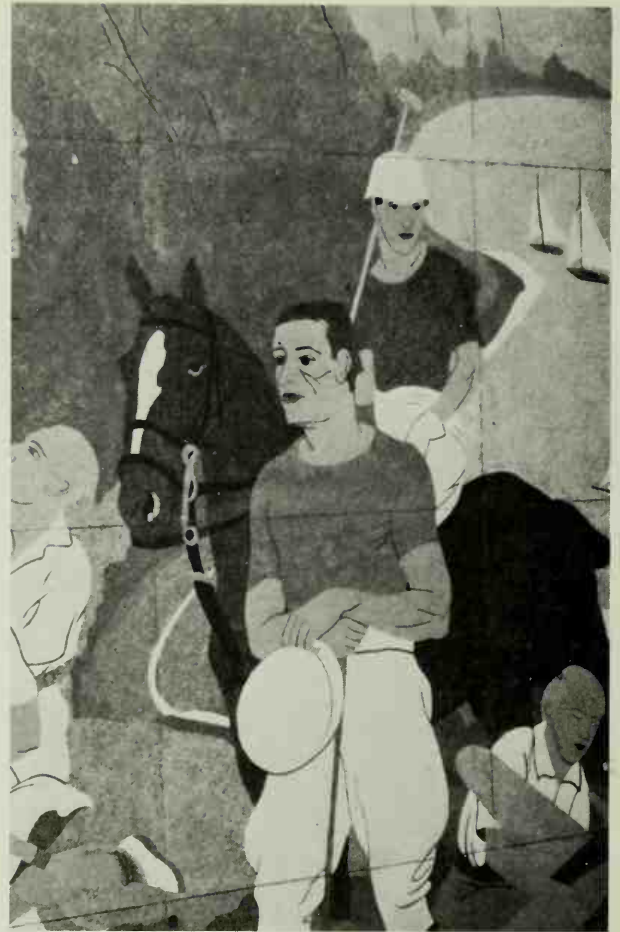


*Stanton Macdonald-Wright's glamorous recreation theme in the Santa Monica City Hall was executed in petrachrome. A form of opus sectile which Macdonald-Wright invented, petrachrome murals were made up of puzzle-piece sections of colored concrete.*

ing the needs of the impoverished working class. Even politically radical artists found their administrators sympathetic, and in California they seem to have easily made their peace with the iconographic expectations of the various projects.

The centralized selection process used by the Section of Painting and Sculpture may have meant that artists learned to "paint Section," but it did not mean that Section painting was necessarily devoid of social comment. Southern California muralist Hugo Ballin's experience with the Section illustrates its apparent eagerness to commission art that was ideologically compatible with New Deal values.<sup>89</sup> An outspoken opponent of both modernism and social realism, Ballin had had seven design proposals rejected by the Section. He attributed his poor success record to the lack of critical social commentary in his nineteenth-century academic images. Finally the frustrated Ballin decided to give the "brain trusters" what he thought they wanted. He submitted a color sketch of drunken miners in a bar shooting people and mingling with "frowsy girls." But what Ballin believed would convince Washington to accept this painting was the "dreamlike satire of fat capitalists" appearing in one corner. "Below this scene of callous wealth," Ballin recalled, a "smug cat was enthroned on a cushion in the rich man's dining room while a poor Negro begs in vain for a crumb."<sup>90</sup> Although the design did not win the competition for which it was submitted, the jury was sufficiently impressed to offer Ballin \$640 to paint the mural at the post office in Englewood, California. Ballin declined the honor, exposed his hoax, and announced he would paint the picture where it belonged—in a saloon.

The Ballin design, the Kassler murals in the Beverly Hills Post Office, and the Howard images in Coit Tower demonstrate that it was possible to paint social commentary without meeting resistance from either the federal bureaucracy or local patrons. The Katz and Refregier disputes indicate that, if anything, the govern-



ment administrators were more liberal than their local patrons. Because the federal government *was* the local patron for all Section and TRAP murals, the lack of critical social commentary in New Deal murals cannot be laid at the feet of school boards and city councils. In short, the overwhelming reason for the benign quality of New Deal art in California was the artists' voluntary acceptance of the American Scene/New Deal philosophy.

California artists earnestly believed that their art should be inspirational, and they painted the world not as it was but as they wished it to be. Their heavy emphasis on themes of work reflected their belief that hard labor would again bring a happy, healthy, and even wealthy life. Accordingly, in a Coit Tower mural by Jane Berlandina, well-dressed couples dance to the music of a ukelele and grand piano at an elegant house party. On the tower's stairwells, beautifully turned-out San Franciscans parade up and down Powell Street in murals



by Lucian Labaudt. In Labaudt's San Francisco Beach Chalet scenes, equestrians, tennis players, and the Saint Francis Yacht Club inhabit the landscape. If, as reputed, a Beach Chalet waterfront scene includes a portrait of Labaudt's friend, labor organizer Harry Bridges, it is a Bridges peacefully wheeling a hand-truck, not leading the violent waterfront strike of 1934.<sup>91</sup> In San Diego other artists painted prosperous equestrians and hunters, and in Santa Monica even polo players made an appearance.<sup>92</sup>

The message carried by New Deal art is clear—hard work will triumph over economic depression. By painting murals celebrating this American ideal, the artists were themselves working in a socially useful way, and the system was rewarding their hard work by paying them money for painting pictures in the middle of the worst economic catastrophe in the country's history.

The mural on page 114 is courtesy Edith Hamlin; the photo on page 107 and the murals on pages 98–99 and 106 are courtesy the San Francisco Public Library's History Room, Civic Center. The other murals were photographed by Don Beatty and are in the collection of the de Saisset Gallery, University of Santa Clara.

## Notes

1. Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History* (New York: The Universal Library, Grosset and Dunlap, 1948), p. 57.
2. William W. Bremer, "Along the 'American Way': The New Deal Work Relief Program for the Unemployed," *The Journal of American History*, December, 1975, p. 637.
3. Alfred Neumeyer, "Around the Galleries," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 6, 1938, p. 32. Although Neumeyer did not mention specific murals, he may have been referring to Coit Tower scenes: Gordon Langdon's "California Industrial Scene," Ralph Stackpole's "Industries of California," George Harris' "Banking and Law," frescoes, Coit Tower, San Francisco, Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), 1934.
4. Barbara Rose, *American Art Since 1900* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1967), p. 113.
5. Matthew Baigell, *The American Scene: American Painting of the*

- 1930s* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), pp. 18–19.
6. Richard D. McKinzie, *The New Deal for Artists* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), pp. 22–23.
7. *Report of the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury to Federal Emergency Relief Administrator—Public Works of Art Project: Dec. 8, 1933 to June 30, 1934* (Washington, D.C., 1934), p. 2.
8. Baigell, *The American Scene*, 55.
9. *Ibid.*, 59.
10. *Ibid.*, 58–61; Marlene Park and Gerald E. Markowitz, *New Deal for Art: The Government Art Projects of the 1930s with Examples from New York City and State* (Hamilton, N.Y.: Gallery Association of New York State, 1977), pp. 29–31.
11. Joseph A. Danysh, interview, Carmel, California, April 24, 1975. See also Gerald M. Monroe, "The '30s: Art, Ideology and the WPA," *Art in America*, November–December, 1975, p. 64; Gerald M. Monroe, "The Artists Union of New York," *Art Journal*, Fall, 1972, pp. 717–20.
12. "San Francisco Art Notes," *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 1, 1934, n.p., clipping in Ferdinand Perret Research Library, Biographical Volumes (arranged alphabetically), National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as Perret, Biography).
13. Stanton Macdonald-Wright, "Introduction," *San Diego Civic Center Fountain and Donal Hord, Sculptor* (n.p.: Federal Art Project of Southern California, Works Progress Administration, mimeographed, [c.1937]), National Collection of Fine Arts, Holger Cahill file, "Photographs by State: California," (hereafter cited as NCFA, Cahill file).
14. Reuben Kadish, interview, New York City, December 31, 1975.
15. For indications that traditional art was encouraged in easel painting as well, see Olin Dows to Belle Baranceanu, November 24, 1936, Archives of American Art, microfilm reel DC 16/484 (hereafter cited as AAA); William H. Clapp to Olin Dows, October 18, 1935, AAA, DC 16/627.
16. Jane DeHart Mathews, "Arts and the People: The New Deal Quest for a Cultural Democracy," *Journal of American History*, September, 1975, pp. 316–339. See also, Thomas C. Parker, "Introduction," *Frontiers of American Art* (San Francisco: De Young Museum, May, 1939), p. 9; Holger Cahill, "American Resources in the Arts," in Francis V. O'Connor, ed., *Art for the Millions* (Greenwich, Ct: New York Graphic Society, 1973), pp. 33–44.
17. Reprint from the *Los Angeles Times*, August 8, 1937, in *Federal Art Project, Press Clippings, WPA, August, 1937* (mimeographed), 2, AAA, LA 1/730.
18. Joseph A. Danysh, "Trends in Modern Art," *California Arts and Architecture*, August, 1938, p. 7.
19. Stanton Macdonald-Wright, *Mosaic and Its Allied Techniques* ([Los Angeles], F.A.P., District 11, mimeographed, [c.1936]), 1, AAA, LA 4/485. See also, Stanton Macdonald-Wright,

- "Sculpture in Southern California," in O'Connor, *Art for the Millions*, 100.
20. Lincoln Kirstein, "Mural Painting," *Murals by American Painters and Photographers* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, May, 1932), p. 9, AAA, LS 2/96.
  21. Ibid.
  22. Ibid., 10.
  23. Bertram D. Wolfe, *The Fabulous Life of Diego Rivera* (New York: Stein and Day, 1963), pp. 280-291; Works Progress Administration, *California Art Research* (San Francisco: WPA, mimeographed, 1937), vol. XX, part 2, Maxine Albrow; Bernard Zakheim, interview, Sebastopol, California, February 15, 1975.
  24. Lorster Feitelson and Helen Lundeberg, interview, Los Angeles, March 14, 1975.
  25. Edward Biberman, interview, Hollywood, April 15, 1975.
  26. Arnautoff apparently meant to paint "*The New Masses*" since *The Masses* had been defunct since World War I.
  27. Victor Arnautoff, "Metropolitan Life," fresco, Coit Tower, San Francisco, PWAP, 1934. Art cited hereinafter without illustration source was photographed on location for author under an National Endowment for the Humanities museum grant.
  28. Ibid.
  29. John Langley Howard, "California Industrial Scenes," fresco, Coit Tower, San Francisco, PWAP, 1934.
  30. Bernard Zakheim, "Library," fresco, Coit Tower, San Francisco, PWAP, 1934; Masha Zakheim Jewett, "The Sacred Shields of Coit Tower: A History of the Coit Tower and its Art," (unpublished ms., San Francisco, 1975).
  31. Evelyn Seeley, "A Frescoed Tower Clangs Shut Amid Gasp," *The Literary Digest*, August 25, 1934, p. 24; McKinzie, *New Deal for Artists*, 24-27; Belisario R. Contreras, "The New Deal Treasury Art Programs and the American Artist: 1933 to 1943" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The American University, 1967), pp. 60-64.
  32. Anton Refregier, "History of San Francisco," casein, Rincon Annex Post Office, San Francisco, Section of Painting and Sculpture, Treasury Department (Section), 1947-1948.
  33. U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Public Works, Subcommittee on Public Buildings and Grounds, *Rincon Annex Murals, San Francisco*, Hearings, 83 Congress, 1 sess., May 1, 1953, 36; Gladys M. Kunkel, "The Mural Paintings by Anton Refregier in the Rincon Annex of the San Francisco Post Office, San Francisco, California" (unpublished master's thesis, Arizona State University, 1969), p. 66.
  34. Alfred Haworth Jones, "The Search for a Usable Past in the New Deal Era," *The American Quarterly*, December, 1971, pp. 710-724.
  35. McKinzie, *The New Deal for Artists*, 5-12; Contreras, "The New Deal Treasury Art Programs," 84-89; William F. McDonald, *Federal Relief Administration and the Arts: The Origins and Administration History of the Arts Projects of the Works Progress Administration* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1969), pp. 357-368; Francis V. O'Connor, *Federal Support for the Visual Arts: The New Deal and Now* (Greenwich, Ct.: New York Graphic Society, 1971), pp. 17-21.
  36. Contreras, "The New Deal Treasury Art Programs," 15, 154.
  37. McKinzie, *The New Deal for Artists*, 85.
  38. Steven M. Gelber and Lydia Modi Vitale, *New Deal Art: California* (Santa Clara: de Saisset Art Gallery and Museum, University of Santa Clara, 1976), pp. 23-24, 110-117.
  39. McKinzie, *The New Deal for Artists*, 124.
  40. Gelber and Modi Vitale, *New Deal Art: California*, 23-24.
  41. Herman Volz, interview, San Jose, California, February 28, 1975.
  42. San Francisco Museum of Art, "Federal Works Agency, Work Projects Administration, Prints; To: The Oakland Museum," March 5, 1965; Works Progress Administration, Federal Art Program, "Allocation Control Cards [prints]," box in National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C.
  43. Gelber and Modi Vitale, *New Deal Art: California*, 117.
  44. Interviews with a score of California artists who worked on New Deal projects failed to turn up anyone who admitted to altering his painting style for the projects.
  45. Charles Kassler, II, "Construction—PWA," fresco, Beverly Hills Post Office, Treasury Relief Art Program (TRAP), 1936.
  46. Charles Kassler to Cecil Jones, October 15, 1937, copy in Artists' Biographical Information file, Office of Fine Arts and Historic Preservation, Government Services Administration, Washington, D.C.
  47. Charles Kassler to Olin Dows, December 17, 1935, AAA, DC 16/484-486.
  48. Olin Dows to Charles Kassler, January 29, 1936, AAA, DC 16/574.
  49. Charles Kassler to Olin Dows, February 3, 1936, AAA, DC 16/541.
  50. Kassler to Jones, October 15, 1937.
  51. Biberman, interview.
  52. Feitelson and Lundeberg, interview.
  53. Belle Baranceanu, interview, San Diego, March 16, 1975; Carlos Dyer to Olin Dows, September 26, 1936, AAA, DC 17/1098-1101.
  54. Cecil H. Jones, memorandum to Bruce, Watson, et al., March 31, 1937, AAA, DC 16/179.
  55. Bernard Reufberg to Cecil Jones, September 10, 1936, AAA, DC 18/69. Artists were so pleased to find any work at all that they usually worked full-time for part-time pay. See Cecil H. Jones to Mr. Dean, January 15, 1937, AAA, DC 17/359.
  56. Richard and Ann O'Hanlon, interview, Mill Valley, California, February 19, 1975.
  57. Jacques Schnier, interview, Lafayette, California, February 27, 1975.

58. Henri De Kruif, "The New Ideal," *The Art Digest*, January 15, 1934, n.p., clipping in Ferdinand Perret Research Library, "Art History, U.S.A.," loose leaf volumes arranged chronologically, National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as Perret, History). The emphasis on work as an American value is especially obvious in the four panels of Paul Julian, "History of Upland," petrachrome, Upland Elementary School, Upland, Federal Art Program (FAP), n.d., U.S. National Archives, Record Group 69, "Photographs of Federal Art Projects, 1936-1943," "Murals—California to Washington," 69-AS, Box 13.
59. Anonymous, "Eagle," cast metal, cast concrete, Burlingame Post Office, [Section?], n.d.; Anonymous, "Eagle," cast concrete, San Diego County Office Building, [FAP?], n.d.; Anonymous, "Eagle," cast metal, Los Angeles Federal Building, Section, n.d.; Anonymous "Eagle," cast metal Martinez Post Office, [Section?], n.d.; Anonymous, "Eagle," gilded cast stone, Napa Post Office, [Section?], n.d.; Anonymous, "Eagle," two in cast metal, Terminal Annex Post Office, Los Angeles, Section, c. 1941; Henry Lion, "Eagle," two in cast metal, Los Angeles Federal Building, Section, 1938; Stuart Holmes, "Eagle," carved wood, Bell Post Office, TRAP, 1937; Stuart Holmes, "Eagle," carved wood, Claremont Post Office [TRAP?], 1936.
60. Archibald Garner, "The Law," cast stone, Los Angeles Federal Building, Section, 1941; James Hansen, "The Young Lincoln," cast stone, Los Angeles Federal Building, Section, 1941; Victor Arnautoff, "Life of Washington," fresco, George Washington High School, San Francisco, FAP, 1935. As a rule, allegorical and historical figures were much more common in sculpture than in painting. See Jo Mora, "Justice," cast stone, Monterey County Court House, Salinas, [FAP?], n.d.; Arnold Foerster, "Marquis de Lafayette," cast stone, Lafayette Park, Los Angeles, [FAP?], n.d.; Frederick Olmsted, "Edison," tufa, San Francisco City College, FAP, 1941; John Palo-Kangas, "Junípero Serra," concrete, Town Square, Ventura, FAP, 1936; Harold Swartz, "John Marshall," cast metal, John Marshall High School, Hollywood, PWAP, 1934; Lorser Feitelson, "Daniel Boone," fresco, Hooper Avenue School, Los Angeles, FAP, n.d., NCFA, Cahill File. Historical heroes were much more popular for easel painting and small portable sculpture. See Olin Dows to Walter Heil, February 11, 1936, AAA, DC 16/957; Henry LaFarge to David Slivka, January 28, 1937, *Ibid.*, 342-343.
61. This is not to say that artists never modeled their portraits after real people. See for example, Robert Hagan, "The Walls They Left Behind," *San Francisco Magazine*, April, 1964, p. 22; Masha Zakheim Jewett, "Scenes From Another Time," *California Living*, *San Francisco Sunday Examiner and Chronicle*, September 12, 1976, p. 26.
62. Jones, *The American Quarterly*, 718-719.
63. Alfred Frankenstein, "Arnautoff Completes 1600 Square Feet of Washington Frescoes," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 21, 1936, n.p., clipping in Perret, Biography; Victor Arnautoff, "Life of Washington," fresco, George Washington High School, San Francisco, FAP, 1935.
64. Victor Arnautoff, "Peace Time Activities of the Army," fresco, Presidio Chapel, San Francisco, SERA, 1935; Anton Refregier, "History of San Francisco," Rincon Annex Post Office, San Francisco, Section, 1947-1948; Marion Simpson, "Exploration and Settling of California," marble opus sectile, Alameda County Court House, Oakland, FAP, 1937; Stanton Macdonald-Wright, "Exploration of California," petrachrome, Santa Monica City Hall, FAP, n.d.; Jo Mora, "California History," cast stone Monterey County Court House, Salinas, FAP, d.n.; Belle Baranceanu, "Indians," Roosevelt Jr. High School, Los Angeles, FAP, 1938; Grace Clements and Helen Lundeberg, "History of California," Venice High School, Venice, FAP, 1941; Lyla M. Harcoff, "Agricultural Scenes," oil on canvas, Santa Ynez High School, Santa Ynez, FAP, 1936; Vladimir Nemkoff, "Early California," carved wood, Hollister Post Office, [Section?], 1936; Edith Hamlin, "Mission Dolores," fresco, Mission High School, San Francisco, FAP, 1937, *California Arts and Architecture*, June, 1940, p. 5; Norman Chamberlain, "History of California," Huntington Park Post Office, TRAP, 1937, U.S. National Archives, Record Group 121, Public Building Service, "Photographs of Murals in United States Post Offices, California," loose leaf, 2 vols. (hereafter cited as RG 121, "Photographs of Murals"); A. F. Brasz, "Indian Agriculture," Redlands City Hall, Redlands, FAP, n.d., U.S. Library of Congress, Division of Prints and Photographs, Lot 3133F, no. 1273-A (hereafter cited as Library of Congress); Althea Ulber, "Youth and Democracy," David Starr Jordan High School, Los Angeles, [FAP?], n.d., *ibid.*, no number.
65. Refregier, "History of San Francisco," fresco, Rincon Annex Post Office, San Francisco, Section, 1947-1948; Primo Caredio, "Indian," mosaic, Beach Chalet, San Francisco, FAP, 1937; Buckley MacGurrian, "Soldier and Indian," El Monte High School, El Monte, FAP, n.d., NCFA, Cahill file.
66. Lyla M. Harcoff, "Vaquero," oil on canvas, Santa Ynez Valley High School, Santa Ynez, FAP, 1936; Stanton Macdonald-Wright, "Spanish California," mosaic, Thomas Edison Jr. High School, Los Angeles, FAP, 1937; Grace Clements and Helen Lundeberg, "History of California," Venice High School, Venice, FAP, 1941; Moira Wallace, "Fiesta," oil on canvas, Monterey Union High School, Monterey, FAP, 1937; Thomas Laman, "Life in Early California," egg tempera, San Mateo Post Office, TRAP, 1937; Donal Hord, "Guardian of the Water," diorite and mosaic, County Administration Building, San Diego, FAP, 1939; Suzanne Scheuer, "Incidents in California History," tempera and oil on canvas, Berkeley Post Office,



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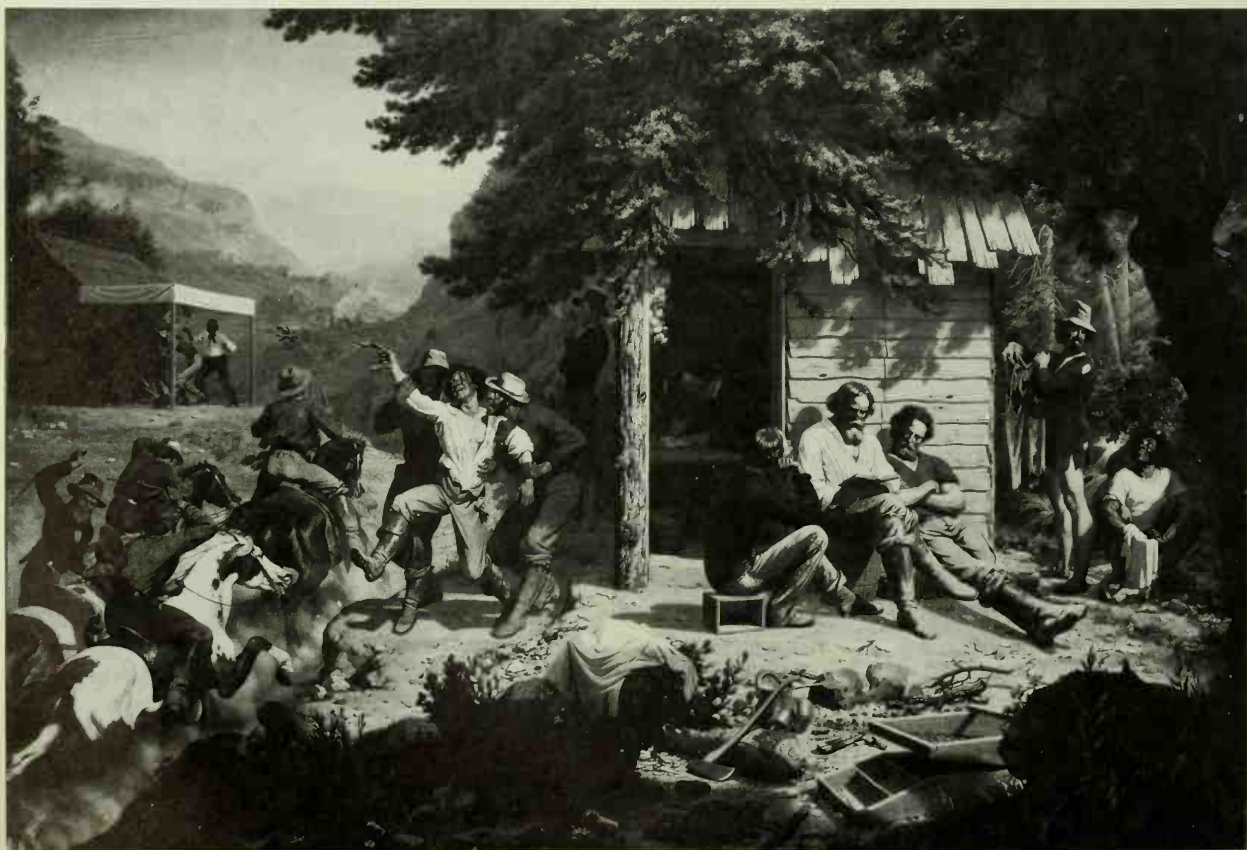
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  84. Joseph A. Danysh, interview, Carmel, California, April 24, 1975.
  85. Thomas Laman to Olin Dows, January 28, 1936, AAA, DC 17/620; Milford Zornes to Olin Dows, August 21, 1936, *ibid.*, 368; Ray Boynton to Olin Dows, September 15, 1936, *ibid.*, 888; Suzanne Scheuer to Olin Dows, December 12, 1935, AAA, DC 16/272; Sherry Peticolas to Henry LaFarge, August 8, 1936, AAA, DC 17/452.
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# “Matilda for Gods Sake Write”

## WOMEN AND FAMILIES ON THE ARGONAUT MIND

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*A romanticized version of the all-male world of the Forty-niners was painted by Charles C. Nahl in “Sunday Morning in the Mines.”*



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Should Lancaster and friends we love  
 Be never brought to mind?  
 No! No! Although our bodies rove  
 Our hearts remain behind!

*From gold rush song recorded in  
 Samuel McNeil's diary*

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Scholarship on women on the American frontier shows signs of quickening, and most of the new investigations begin with an analysis of women's writings, a natural enough place to start.<sup>1</sup> But it is misleading to overlook evidence of the frontier experience left by the men who shared the arduous migratory journey. Between 1849 and 1851 the overland trail to California was traveled almost exclusively by men who had been touched with gold fever after the discovery at Sutter's Mill in 1848. Certainly some of these argonauts were so obsessed with the prospect of fabulous wealth that little else seemed to matter. For most of the forty-niners, however, the experience of leaving home and providing for themselves physically and psychologically in the absence of women was profoundly enlightening. If any strain of thought unified the forty-niners, it was surely the sharp awareness that, often for the first time in their lives, they were without women and families. For many this resulted in a new consciousness of the practical and emotional roles women and families played in their lives, and, for some, the experience engendered regret that they had left home at all.<sup>2</sup>

Forty-niner diaries and letters are rich sources for

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studying male attitudes toward women and families. Because men traveling to California and living in the gold fields without women were forced to take on traditionally female tasks such as cooking, laundering, and sewing, their personal written accounts reveal the attitudinal importance of this enforced sex-role change. Secondly, their diaries suggest that the absence of women from the forty-niner wagon trains and the mining camps of California made neither experience a "man's world." Physical absence seems to have brought forth increased psychological dependence on women and revealed to the argonaut diarists the physical and emotional importance of their sweethearts, wives, and mothers back home.

Most of the participants in the first three years of the gold rush, of course, were male. A reasonable estimate for the total migration to California in 1849 is 50,000 people, of which some 30,000 came by the northern overland route from western Missouri through present day Nebraska, Wyoming, southern Idaho or northern Utah, Nevada, and California.<sup>3</sup> Traditional conjecture places the emigrants at nearly 95 percent male.<sup>4</sup> One other estimate, a figure assigned by the postal clerk at Fort Laramie, supposed that 97 percent of the emigrants in the 1850s were men and that there were more children than women on the trail.<sup>5</sup>

Whatever the exact percentage of women and children, it is more significant that the men who kept trail journals repeatedly noted their absence and made explicit and happily surprised references to their occasional appearance. Women and children were "curiosities" and "novelties." In June, 1849, for example, David Cosad "saw some white woman—the first we had seen in over two months."<sup>6</sup> Or as one miner noted glumly: "Deer are getting very scarce and—'dears'—are still scarcer."<sup>7</sup>

For the 30,000 emigrants who crossed the northern plains in 1849, there remain 132 known diaries, a statistically small number amounting to less than .5 percent.<sup>8</sup> This study is based on an examination of sixty-eight of



THE MINER'S SUNDAY.

these northern plains diaries, including the only two extant women's accounts, and additional letters, sea journals, southern route diaries, and several northern route diaries for the years 1850-1852. Many of the accounts end with their authors' arrivals in California, though some continue on to provide glimpses of life in the mining camps.

Some of the diaries are simply records of mileage and weather conditions; others are fragmentary accounts. In the main, however, emigrant diaries make informative, entertaining reading because the diarists were observant, intelligent, and articulate, offering opinions on a variety of subjects. Extensive references to women and families make the diaries excellent sources for an examination of human relationships in the period, but they are sources that must be used with care.

One problem with diaries is their lack of complete candor. For example, the researcher will look in vain for information concerning the diarists' sex lives, including possible homosexual contacts. Sex was not often discussed in print in mid-nineteenth century America. Diaries, like letters, were sometimes intended for publi-

cation, and in almost all cases were written for relatives. As one diarist admitted: "I have left out all parts as should not be 'Recollected' for there has many scenes taken place & been exhibited on the 'Plaines' that should sleep in their silent & dreary wilds, & never be spoken or read of by civilized men."<sup>9</sup> At best, diarists offer incomplete pictures of life on the trail.

A more troubling problem is that of typicality, or representativeness. The more articulate argonauts, of course, left a higher proportion of diaries, and a survey of the diarists' professions reveals an unusual number of past and future doctors, judges, and politicians. The California migration was not a lower class movement, but neither was it purely one of the upper-middle class; many diarists were revolted by the activities and habits of their less exalted compatriots. Another problem is that the less articulate and educated diarists offer fewer clues about their emotions and thoughts. Finally, attitudinal history itself is a risk-filled proposition. What the diarists say they feel must be taken as representative of their true thoughts. Yet diarists rarely seemed to act on their perceptions; they say, for instance, that they miss their



*Miners forced to wash their own clothes  
could not help but appreciate the services  
of the women back home.*

wives, but few returned home in less than two years' time.

It would, nevertheless, be foolish to overlook the great potential of the diaries as historical sources. They are rich and interesting primary documents that express what some men thought to be important at one time. They are not the last word on all forty-niners or on all mid-century Americans, but they contain a rare expression of the feelings and attitudes of the argonauts.

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"How do you like it overland?" his mother she will say,  
"All right, excepting cooking, then the devil is to pay;  
For some won't cook, and others can't, and then it's  
curse and damn.

The coffee-pot's begun to leak, so has the frying pan."

*From gold rush song "Crossing the Plains"*

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The relative absence of women on the trail and in California forced the forty-niners to assume roles traditionally occupied by women. Though a number of the diarists were bachelors, many were young men who lived at home and enjoyed their mothers' services. For most of the diarists, the chores of cooking, washing clothes, and sewing were new. Entertainment also took on new dimensions, and diarists commented on the novelty of finding a female dance partner and the necessity for men to take women's roles. But no consensus was achieved on the meaning of the role-changing. Some diarists proudly claimed they had successfully filled traditionally female roles, while others cursed their lot, failed miserably, and evinced a heightened sensitivity to the arduousness of women's work.

With an occasional note of gratitude to Providence or a mother-in-law's recipe, some diarists wrote eagerly of their new-found aptitude for cooking.<sup>10</sup> While several were simply satisfied with their abilities to prepare palatable meals, others boasted that their dishes "would

have been called fine even in the States," or that their meals were the equal of their wives'.<sup>11</sup> Elijah Farnham grudgingly agreed to cook for his mess, and within a few days he became possessive about his meals: "There was considerable wrangling about the mess. No helping themselves to bread."<sup>12</sup> There were even several gourmet cooks. Amos Bachelder's parboiled grouse, William McBride's apple dumplings, and Jasper Hixson's coffee—roasted well and "kept . . . in a tight vessel to get all the aroma"—were served with pride and greeted with enthusiasm.<sup>13</sup>

Less likely to be performed with virtuosity was the task of washing clothes. Of course, few men liked doing laundry (as did few women), but several diarists took a stoical stance. They viewed it as an unavoidable chore "the journey . . . rendered necessary" and spoke of it as perfunctorily as other diarists might speak of hunting buffalo.<sup>14</sup> Writing from the mines, Epaphroditus Wells assured his wife that "it takes but a few minutes to wash a shirt, drawers & a pair of socks," incidentally revealing the extent of many an emigrant's wardrobe.<sup>15</sup> Charles Bush's letter to his parents shows a young man enjoying his newly won freedom: "We ware cloaths here the same as we did in the States, such as pantaloons, but no peticotes. We do our washing; we wash our own cloths and our own faces and when we dont choos to wash we go with dirty cloths and dirty faces too."<sup>16</sup> Bush's comments aptly summarize the thinking of those who felt they had adapted to the trail and did not need female cooks or laundresses. How much of their pride was merely bravado is left to the psycho-historian to discover.

Men on the trail were forced to adjust their patterns of relaxation and their forms of entertainment. Fighting homesickness and taking every possible opportunity to socialize with frontier women, they nonetheless organized and seemed to enjoy traditionally male activities or ones that had involved women but could be undertaken without them. Accordingly, the men hunted, played cards, and debated.<sup>17</sup> They even got together for



*The arrival of mail from home caused great excitement and sometimes severe disappointment for lonely miners, many of whom were separated from loved ones for several years.*

dances, or "Hoe Downs."<sup>18</sup> At one celebration, Charles Kirkpatrick observed, "The boys all apparently enjoy[ed] themselves as well as if they had been at Fishers tavern to a new years ball."<sup>19</sup> Invited to a party in Yuba City, California, John Brazier discovered that only seven women would attend. At their encouragement, Brazier dressed in women's clothing "and danced half the night ere any of the men knew but what he was a woman."<sup>20</sup>

Despite the resourcefulness of some men who readily changed roles, a greater number displayed a marked inability to cook, wash, and sew, and many of them expressed increased sensitivity to the enormity of performing these tasks. Though neither the persistence of this sensitivity nor its result can be shown by the diaries, the fact that emigrants acknowledged its existence says much about the importance of the trail and the California mines as settings which produced attitudinal changes.

Whether the men cooked or not, there were certainly good reasons for complaints about trail food. The hardships of three months of overland travel made it impossible to use fresh food, made cooking contingent on finding wood or dried buffalo chips, and diminished variety in the menu.<sup>21</sup> More often, though, unsatisfactory meals stemmed from the cooks' incompetence. The overland journals are filled with stories concerning raw bacon, burned bread, and men paralyzed by the necessity to cook supper.<sup>22</sup> Henry Shombre's party, cooking for the first time, produced "bread ½ dow ½ burnt . . . supper shure!"<sup>23</sup> This meal compared favorably with Niles Searls' bread, which had the consistency of "gutta percha" and had to be thrown out.<sup>24</sup> Henry Austin boiled too much rice and "spoiled it all;" the following morning he reported an "unpleasant feeling in gastric region."<sup>25</sup>

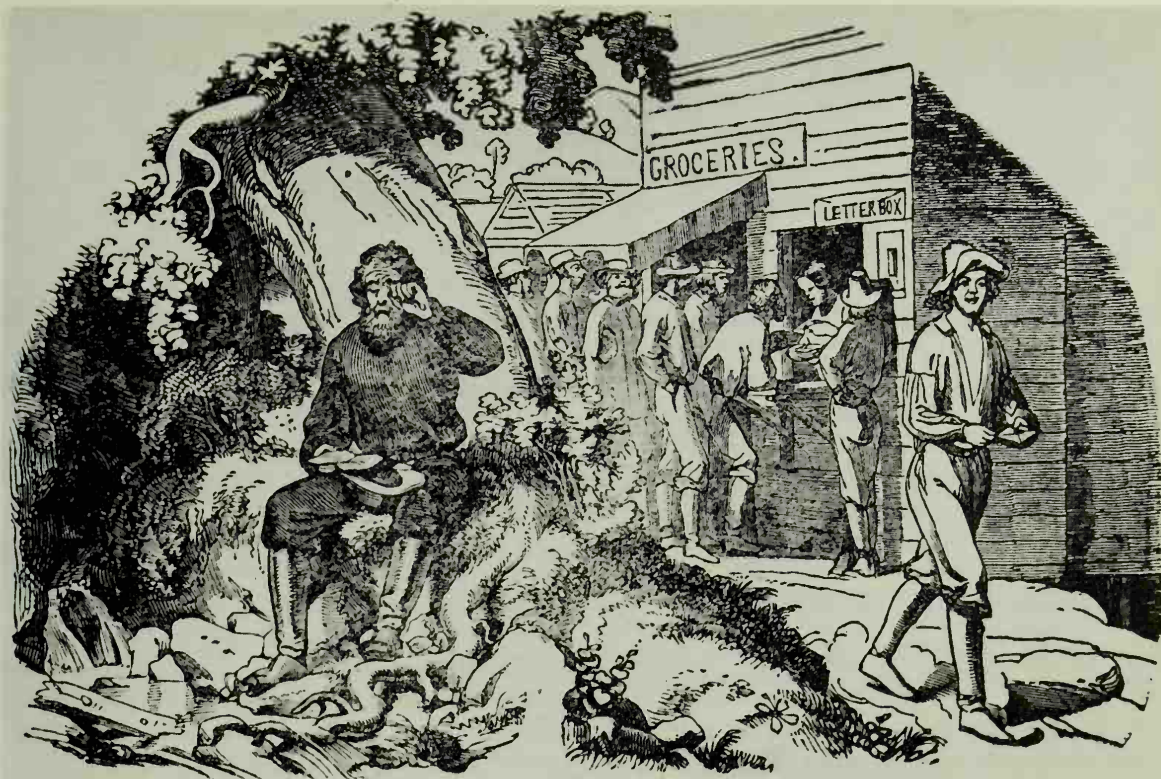
Fresh meat was a rare treat on the trail, and Alonzo Delano, having shot an antelope, gleefully prepared himself a steak. He naively placed the meat on the coals, where it soon burned. Seeking to salvage his prize, Delano melted a stearin candle which he poured over the

steak as gravy and sat down to enjoy his feast, "the envy of several lookers-on." With his first bite, the stearin cooled, hardened, and coated his mouth "with a covering like hard beeswax, making mastication next to impossible." Delano promptly shared his meal with his unsuspecting messmates.<sup>26</sup>

The men's incompetence as cooks frequently reminded them of their sweethearts, wives, and mothers who had fed them in the past. On the trail, diarist Charles Ferguson remembered his mother's cooking, and Finley McDiarmid wished his wife were with him when he found it difficult and "unpleasant" to prepare his own meals.<sup>27</sup> In letters, too, miners expressed their homesickness in terms of "cakes and pies," registering their *in absentia* appreciation for women's singular abilities.<sup>28</sup>

Although the forty-niners' longing for women to cook their meals was hardly a portent for the increased freedom of women in the nineteenth century, the diarists' newfound appreciation for the difficulty and importance of the role should not be overlooked. Was their appreciation and sensitivity enough to draw them away from the gold fields? One eminent historian of the gold rush has noted that "the goal of all was a quick fortune and a speedy return 'home'."<sup>29</sup> We know also, with diarist R. C. Shaw, that "many a miner left California for his home with more dyspepsia than gold."<sup>30</sup>

For many diarists, washing was another disagreeable task that warranted strong written complaint. Some men showed reluctance even to attempt washing clothes. If the diarists' explicit mention of doing laundry accurately indicates the number of times they performed the chore, the intervals between washings were often long indeed.<sup>31</sup> In a letter to his wife mailed from the trail, Henry Page requested she "tell Mother the soap answers first rate—though we have not yet washed any of our clothes."<sup>32</sup> On July 22, 1849, William Chamberlain recorded: "Changed my undercloths & think the first time since I took my bath in William Creek;" that had been nearly a month earlier. Chamberlain wryly added



"THE EXPRESS HAS ARRIVED."

that he "omited Ironing and Starching."<sup>33</sup> Jasper Hill wrote that many miners never washed clothes. When their outfits became uncomfortably dirty, they simply bought new ones, or, as Samuel Swearingen put it, "We pull them off and throw them."<sup>34</sup>

Even when the men did resolve to do their laundry, many met with difficulty. Washing clothes was "a sad task," "a sorry business to the hands," or "the most disagreeable part of the trip."<sup>35</sup> After much scrubbing, Niles Searls was unsure whether he had cleaned his clothes or simply attained "an equalisation of dirt" throughout the garments.<sup>36</sup> William Johnston placed his clothes in a stream, walked back to camp for his soap, and returned to find that most of his clothes had drifted off. He consoled himself that he would have less laundry to do in the future.<sup>37</sup>

The difficulties of washing clothes sensitized some diarists to the contributions made by women as laundresses. After washing, reflected Delano, "We thought of our wives and sweet-hearts at home, and wondered that we were ever dissatisfied with their impatience on a washing day." Had the women been present, he con-

tinued, "We should heartily have asked their pardon, and allowed them to scold to their heart's content." Delano repeated his promise a month later at wash time.<sup>38</sup> Having "equalized" his dirt, Searls vowed to "more fully appreciate the labor of those by whom this arduous task is performed."<sup>39</sup> Peter Decker "concluded the washerwoman earns all & more than she gets."<sup>40</sup> Obviously, role changes compelled by the California migration affected the attitudes of these men who made the crossing. Respect and appreciation for women as laundresses mingled freely with the less salutary hope that the women remain content with their traditional occupation.

Occasional references to sewing also appear in the diaries. Stephen Gage lost his wallet through a hole in his back pocket, the result, he thought, of "not having a woman" to do the mending.<sup>41</sup> James Lyne, in a revealing admission, wrote: "I have always been inclined to deride the vocation of ladies until now but must confess it by far the most irksome I have ever tried." Lyne attributed his heightened consciousness to an examination of his wife's stitching on his saddle bag.<sup>42</sup>



Conclusions about role changes drawn from this increased appreciation for female contributions to daily life must remain tentative. The diarists who believed they had readily adjusted to women's roles may have hardened their attitudes toward women. There is also no reason to believe that any of the diarists would have sought to release women from the travail of domestic tasks. Nonetheless, role-assumption among most of the male emigrants clearly brought increased appreciation for the women who performed in the roles.

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I shall ne'er forgit my feelins when I bid adieu to all;  
 Sally cotched me round the neck, then I began to bawl;  
 When I sot in, they all commenced—you ne'er did hear  
 the like,  
 How they all took on and cried, the day I left old Pike.

*From gold rush song "Joe Bowers"*

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For most argonauts the decision to travel west meant leaving behind female and familial contacts. It was not, in many cases, a decision made easy by the allure of fortune, but instead one known to mean prolonged separation and physical ordeal. There were, of course, exceptions. Henry Page was apparently henpecked, and W. W. Call "on more than one occasion" was urged by his wife to leave.<sup>43</sup> Most often, however, diarists recorded moving scenes of leavetaking: Charles Tuttle wrote a long and passionate letter to his wife several days from home; Peter Decker "lost control of his feelings;" and Albert Thurber's mother "clasped [him] around the neck and wept" after exacting a promise that he not return a pauper.<sup>44</sup> Many of those who started west became discouraged, felt pangs of responsibility, and turned back.<sup>45</sup>

Gold was the major reason for the 1849 California migration, and some emigrants invested the metal with

transcendent qualities far in excess of its mundane ability to make men wealthy. Jasper Hixson marvelled that the pursuit of gold dust could cause men to leave their families and made an apt analogy to the crusades.<sup>46</sup> But few who speculated about their motivations remained as honest. Fate, not gold, impelled them forward, or, as B. F. Washington put it in verse: "But ah! A change came over me and I have left my home,/ A wanderer to a stranger land, mid howling wastes to roam."<sup>47</sup> In a similar vein, Lucius Fairchild of St. Joseph observed: "I may be foolish[,] but something urges me onward and onward."<sup>48</sup> Again and again the men absolved themselves of all responsibility in the face of a powerful conspiracy of unseen forces that carried them from their homes.

But no amount of rationalization could overcome the severe homesickness experienced by a majority of the diarists on the trail or in California. Homesickness involved a constellation of factors, and, recalling the miner whose loneliness could have been eased by home-baked "cakes and pies," the components relating to women and family are not always easy to isolate. The specificity of many forty-niner diarists in this regard is therefore both convenient and striking, and it speaks volumes for the psychological influence held by women and families. If this admission by men of their emotional ties emerges nowhere else in western literature, it appears in the accounts of the California trail.

While the desire for women as domestic helpers and civilizing influences reinforced and cannot be fully separated from the psychological longing for women, it was precisely the latter that occupied the thoughts of many unmarried diarists. Thus, Henry Shombre became melancholy during a stroll among the flowers: "Wish for a pretty girl but alas have none."<sup>49</sup> A quiet Christmas in the mines forced George Jewett to confront "the loneliness of man and his dependence for pleasure upon woman," an admission revealing the limitations of his all-male entertainment.<sup>50</sup> Enos Christman wrote his



fiancée that his love for her had increased with the length of his absence, a phenomenon often described by homesick diarists.<sup>51</sup> Peter Decker, though more circumspect, worried that he would return to find all the home-town women married.<sup>52</sup> Though a greater proportion of single than married diarists remained in the mines, the allure of sweethearts or female acquaintances at home was often enough to carry a miner back. Many diarists notably referred to their journeys as "absences" rather than permanent relocations.

Letters and diary entries regarding homesickness for sweethearts did not match the intensity of the accounts of married men. Desperation increased as the married

diarists moved farther and farther from their families and away from mail service. Domestic differences were soon forgotten, replaced by anxious concern for their families' welfare.

In early May, for example, W. N. Steuben experienced "some melancholly reflections;" by July he feared his absence was "insupportable."<sup>53</sup> By the time Samuel McCoy reached Independence, Missouri, his love for his wife had "doubled, trebled . . . and run [ ] over," and "parental affection . . . rent [his] aching heart" as he prospected for gold along the American River.<sup>54</sup> To his mortification, Samuel Swearingen found that he had forgotten how his youngest son looked.<sup>55</sup> One emigrant



A LIVE WOMAN IN THE MINES.

*The occasional arrival of a respectable woman in the gold fields was an event of consequence and celebration.*

---

We miss thy cheering, winning smile,  
So familiar when at home;  
We miss thy merry, ringing laugh,  
Thy sweetest, gentlest tone;  
We miss thee more and more each day—  
In truth thou'rt missed in every way.

*From gold rush song "We Miss Thee, Ladies"*

---

closed his letter, "Good-by with tears"; another's homesickness "lacerated" his feelings; a third missed an "answering look of affection" as he stood with arms outstretched looking eastward from the Continental Divide.<sup>56</sup>

Occasionally, fatalistic diarists cursed their folly in having left their families and feared the worst. An Ann Arbor doctor, C. N. Ormsby, fantasized that cholera had entered Michigan. Making an alarmingly short step to morbidity, Ormsby wrote his wife from Salt Lake City: "I speak and think of my dear children as though I were conscious of their continued playful and sportive existence. But how do I know, but that on this day, one, two, perhaps all of them are reposing beneath the sod? How know I, but that at some moment of my highest cheerfulness and merriment, the funeral knell of my wife echoed over the hills of Ann Arbor?"<sup>57</sup> David McCollum despaired of ever returning to see his wife and children and swore he would be happy to support them in a conventional, if humble, manner should he be fortunate enough to arrive back home. McCollum's fatalism is perhaps understandable, as he was good friends with Dr. Ormsby.<sup>58</sup>

An argument with his wife may have strengthened Henry Page's resolve to go to California, yet his copious letters home were reassuring almost from the start. From St. Joseph, Page wrote that he had begun "to

realise more & more, my separation from you"; two days later, he observed that "absence increases all those kind & dear feelings I have for you." By the time he reached California, Page claimed not only that his love for his wife had "increased one hundred fold," but he apologized for starting the fight and confessed that its cause was his "perverse disposition." When Mary wrote that their young son was learning to talk, and Page read his son's words—"Papa & me work in the field & mama cook dinner"—Page's eyes filled with tears. The family was happily reunited in early 1851.<sup>59</sup>

Although there is no evidence that David DeWolf was henpecked into joining the westward migration, his first letter to his wife Matilda, written from Cincinnati, reveals a man of independence and some callousness. He directed Matilda to send him money "as soon as you can as I cannot get along without it," and he closed the body of the letter simply: "I have no more to write." There was no indication of homesickness in DeWolf's straightforward narrative.

Two months later, in June, 1849, DeWolf wrote from the Platte River. There was a perceptible softening of his attitude as he allowed himself to confess, "To tell you the truth Tilda I have been homesick several times, & if I get home I am sure I will never leave it again long at a time." Becoming more emotional over the months, he criticized himself for leaving home, visualized kissing his daughter, and dreamed the inevitable dreams of home. "If a man wants to learn the value of a wife," he declared, "let him have one & leave her & come to California."

DeWolf arrived in Weaverville in late October, 1849, expecting to discover a letter from his wife. Finding none, he became despondent. Trying to persuade himself that his wife had written, he blamed the mail service and claimed to hear "a silent voice whisper she has not forgotten you." Throughout the following autumn and winter of 1849, DeWolf wrote long, discursive letters, the themes of which were always the same: "Matilda



# THE MINERS' LAMENTATIONS.

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for Gods sake write." DeWolf, like other diarists, admitted crying from loneliness. DeWolf finally received a letter in May, 1850. He was overjoyed, but his anxiety to return home lingered. He left the mines late that winter and was home by early spring.<sup>60</sup>

Unlike Page and DeWolf, many of the young gold seekers were single and particularly possessed a keen filial piety. Of course, the most prolific diarists and letter writers corresponded with parents as well as with sweethearts or wives. The pattern of increasing homesickness and subsequent appreciation for the psychological power of women and families persists in the relationships between diarists and their parents and relatives.

A number of miners greatly missed their childhood homes.<sup>61</sup> Peter Decker wrote often of his absence from the "family circle" which included his brothers and sisters. Listening to his traveling companions sing folksongs, Decker was reminded of home, "of other days & better —of the unbroken family circle." These reflections on family, he claimed, tempered the natural tendency toward selfishness on the plains.<sup>62</sup>

Lucius Fairchild wrote to his parents and his sister's family at nearly every opportunity. Carrying with him

his mother's ring and pictures of his family, he reflected sadly, "No one has left more at home than me." Pausing in St. Joseph, Fairchild considered returning home when he realized that no letters could reach him once he crossed the Missouri. After making an agonizing decision to continue on, he apologized to his sister for having been "mean and troublesome," and assured her that she and their mother had always been his "best and dearest friends."

From California, Fairchild wrote of his anxiety about home and advised all his friends against making the journey. He joked that prospecting for gold would make him a good father, because he had learned to "rock the cradle to perfection," and he instructed his mother to "tell all the girls." Eventually, Fairchild grew tired of mining and tired of resisting the pull toward home. He returned to Wisconsin "and home and mother" in 1855.<sup>63</sup>

Although homesickness could strike the sensitive diarist or letter writer at any time, certain events seemed more likely to bring it to the surface. A holiday such as the Fourth of July, a quiet Sunday afternoon, or simply a walk under the stars were enough to make many diarists melancholy.<sup>64</sup> Homesickness also appeared when





*A popular gold rush lettersheet facetiously offered moral guidelines for men cut loose from the tempering influence of home and family.*

the emigrant failed adequately to assume a woman's role. Nothing, however, called it forth as rapidly as encountering sickness or death.

That homesickness surfaced during times of suffering is not surprising, but this occurrence helps distinguish the emotion from a general hankering for a woman to fill her societal roles. Most doctors, of course, were men, but when the emigrant felt ill, he usually did not want a doctor as much as he wanted a woman's care. With "every bone . . . on the aiche," the ailing Charles Tinker thought of home; suffering a mild case of dysentery, William Chamberlain missed "the comforts of home, the kind attentions of dear ones."<sup>65</sup> Isaac Foster, also a victim of dysentery, admitted: "Much better if a person is sick to be at home where his wife of his bosom . . . can sympathize with him, and administer to his relief."<sup>66</sup> Though some bore their afflictions stoically, sickness frequently triggered confessions of homesickness from even the most stubbornly independent diarists.

Death on the plains and in the mines was a fairly common occurrence. Yet diarists seem to have been especially concerned that they might die alone, far from civilization, with no sweetheart, wife, or mother, as one diarist put it, to "chafe [his] temple and wipe the cold sweat from [his] brow."<sup>67</sup> Several men suggested that death at home would be preferable to the mere threat of death on the plains "where no tender hand is nigh to smooth the dying man's pillow," if indeed he had a pillow.<sup>68</sup> The peripatetic Dr. Ormsby told of visiting two men at Fort Laramie who were dying of cholera. Asked to stay and talk to them, Ormsby found himself "describing to them my separation from my family." Suddenly, both men began "sob[bing] convulsively," and the doctor realized he had broached too sensitive a subject. "Of course," he concluded, "my further utterance was choked. All we could do was to let sympathy have its scope."<sup>69</sup>

Chronic melancholy was not the only result of homesickness. From time to time, miners became suspicious

of sweethearts and wives, and their regret for having left home was consumed by nagging jealousy. Suspicion, like homesickness, increased over the months without news from home. Enos Christman, Samuel McCoy, and Charles Tuttle voiced their suspicions in letters home; Tuttle warned his wife about men who would "haul down the souls and bodies of their unsuspecting victims into the lowest depths of hell." This was not, it would seem, an isolated fear. The popular forty-niner song "Joe Bowers" begins with sobbing Sally trying to prevent Joe from leaving, but ends with Joe learning that his Sally has married another.

The depth of homesickness discovered in the diaries and letters of the argonauts indicates a profound psychological dependence upon women and families. Men on the California trail, lacking women to perform domestic chores and to give emotional support, came face to face with their reliance on women and experienced heightened sensitivity to the importance of women in their lives.

While this does not mean that men forthwith moved to share women's tasks or allowed women to control their own lives, it does indicate that descriptions of the California gold rush as a male movement are correct only in the sense of a head count. The psychological importance of the women left at home made them shadow members of every party of California argonauts.

The Nahl painting is courtesy the E. B. Crocker Art Gallery, Sacramento. The three drawings are from Alonzo Delano, *Pen Knife Sketches; or, Chips of the Old Block* (Sacramento, 1854), pp. 17, 21, 33. "Miners' Lamentations" is courtesy the Huntington Library, San Marino. The Ten Commandments lettersheet is from the CHS Collections.

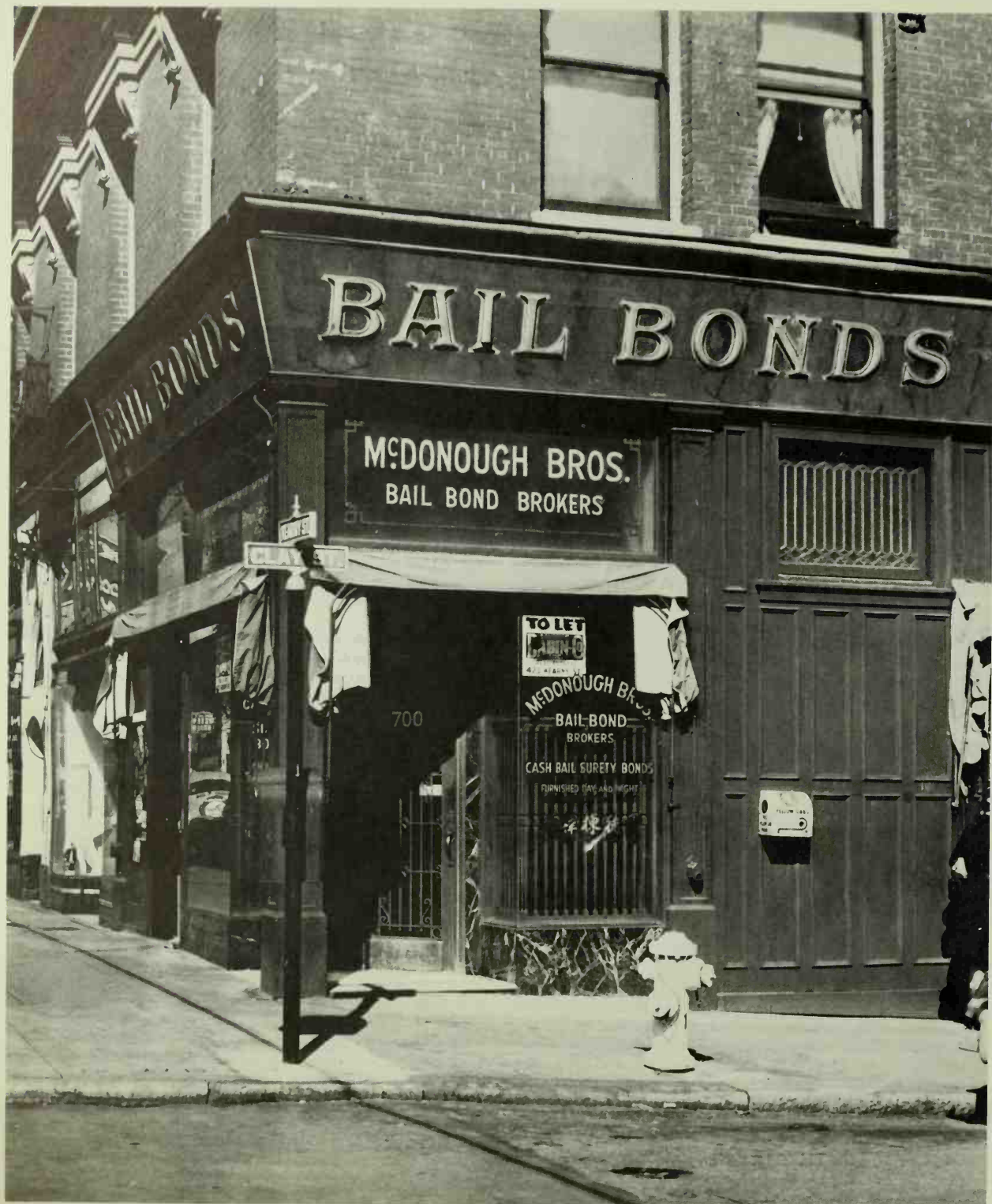


## Notes

1. Important older studies such as those by William F. Sprague and Dee Brown are now being revised—directly or obliquely—by scholars who have learned from the new women's history. Articles by Beverly Stoeltje and Glenda Riley on the image of frontier women and by Johnny Faragher and Christine Stansell on overland trail women have introduced a refreshing subtlety to the field. Forthcoming studies by Lillian Schlissel promise to further enrich our understanding of the frontier experience. See William Forrest Sprague, *Women and the West: A Short Social History* (Boston, 1940); Dee Brown, *The Gentle Tamers* (Lincoln, 1958); Beverly Stoeltje, "'A Helpmate for Man Indeed': The Image of the Frontier Woman," *Journal of American Folklore*, 88 (January-March, 1975): 27; Glenda Riley, "Images of the Frontierswoman: Iowa as a Case Study," *Western Historical Quarterly*, 8 (April, 1977): 189; Johnny Faragher and Christine Stansell, "Women and Their Families on the Overland Trail to California and Oregon, 1842-1867," *Feminist Studies*, 2 (February-March, 1975): 150.
2. Faragher and Stansell write that "men viewed drudgery, calamity, and privation as trials along the road to prosperity, unfortunate but inevitable corollaries of the rational decision they had made" ("Women and their Families," 153). This conclusion incorrectly ascribes a confident single-mindedness to the forty-niners and indicates the authors' failure to examine systematically sources left by men during the westward migration.
3. Russell E. Bidlack, ed., *Letters Home: The Story of Ann Arbor's Forty-Niners* (Ann Arbor, 1960), p. 51; Helen S. Giffin, ed., *The Diaries of Peter Decker* (Georgetown, Cal., 1966), p. 9; Georgia Willis Read, "Women and Children on the Oregon-California Trail in the Gold Rush Years," *Missouri Historical Review*, 29 (October, 1944): 6.
4. Georgia Willis Read, an avid student of the California gold rush, speculates that diarists, newspaper editors, and military clerks—the principal sources for this guesswork—unwittingly overlooked women in wagon trains because they often remained inside the covered wagons rather than walking or riding alongside. Accordingly, Read suggests that 85 percent of the 1849 emigrants were men, 10 percent were women, and 5 percent were children.
5. Finley McDiarmid to his wife, June 20, 1850, Letters of Finley McDiarmid, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley (henceforth "Bancroft").
6. Giffin, *Peter Decker*, 143-48; Diary of Henry Austin, July 5, 1849, Bancroft; "Journal of a Trip to California by the Overland Route," David Cosad, June 24, 1849, California Historical Society, San Francisco (henceforth "CHS").
7. Joseph Schafer, ed., "California Letters of Lucius Fairchild," *Wisconsin Historical Society Collections*, 31 (1931): 59.
8. The most complete bibliography of 1849 northern-route diaries has been assembled by Dale Morgan in *The Overland Diary of James A. Pritchard* (Denver, 1959).
9. "The Plains and Deserts of North America," Tipton Lindsey September 7, 1849, Bancroft.
10. Thomas D. Clark, ed., *Gold Rush Diary: Being the Journal of Elisha Douglas Perkins on the Overland Trail in the Spring and Summer of 1849* (Lexington, Ky., 1967), pp. 53-4.
11. Doyce B. Nunis, ed., *The Letters of a Young Miner* (San Francisco, 1964), p. 13; Epaphroditus Wells to his wife, May 8, 1849, Letters of Epaphroditus Wells, Bancroft; Journal of Charles Kirkpatrick, August 15, 1849, Bancroft; Israel F. Hale, "Diary of a Trip to California in 1849," *Society of California Pioneers Quarterly*, 2 (June, 1925): 109; Samuel McCoy, *Pioneering on the Plains* (Kaukauna, Wisconsin, 1924), pp. 38, 54-5.
12. Merrill Mattes and Esley J. Kirk, eds., "From Ohio to California in 1849: The Gold Rush Journal of Elijah Bryan Farnham," *Indiana Magazine of History*, September-December, 1950, p. 303.
13. "Journal to California, 1849," Amos Bachelder, 20, CHS; William G. Johnston, *Experiences of a Forty-Niner* (New York, 1973), p. 41; Diary of Jasper Morris Hixson, 10, CHS.
14. "Diary of the 'Boston and Newton Joint Stock Association' in Crossing the Plains in 1849," Charles Gould, 46, Bancroft; Everett Walters and George B. Strother, eds., "The Gold Rush Diary of Henry Tappan," *Annals of Wyoming*, 25 (June, 1953): 118; "Journal of a Trip to California Across the Continent from Weston, Mo., to Weber Creek, Cal., in the summer of 1850," Charles W. Smith, May 26, 1850, CHS.
15. Epaphroditus Wells to his wife, January 19, 1851, Letters of Epaphroditus Wells, Bancroft.
16. Charles Bush to his parents, August 20, 1850, Letters of Charles Bush, Bancroft.
17. "Journal of 1849, Dr. T. —," 6, Bancroft; Diary of Henry Austin, April 18, 1849, Bancroft.
18. Journal of Charles Kirkpatrick, May 6, July 24, 1849, Bancroft; Clark, *Elisha Douglas Perkins*, 81; "Elijah Bryan Farnham," 415.
19. Journal of Charles Kirkpatrick, May 10, 1849, Bancroft.
20. "'49 Experiences," William Armstrong, 12, Bancroft.
21. Alonzo Delano, *Life on the Plains and Among the Diggings* (Ann Arbor, 1854, 1966), p. 75; Kimball Webster, *The Gold Seekers of '49* (Manchester, N.H., 1917), p. 34; Johnston, *Experiences of a Forty-Niner*, 88; Diary of William Chamberlain, June 18, 1849, Bancroft.
22. Clark, *Elisha Douglas Perkins*, 4; Johnston, *Experiences of a Forty-Niner*, 134.
23. Diary of Henry Shombre, April 2, 1849, Bancroft.
24. Diary of Niles Searls, May 27, 1849, Bancroft.
25. Diary of Henry Austin, July 18-19, 1849, Bancroft.
26. Delano, *Life on the Plains*, 224.
27. Charles D. Ferguson, *The Experiences of a Forty-Niner* (Cleve-



- land, 1888), pp. 92-3; Finley McDiarmid to his wife, May 22, 1850, Letters of Finley McDiarmid, Bancroft.
28. McCoy, *Pioneering*, 100; Nunis, *Letters of a Young Miner*, 31.
29. Rodman Paul, *California Gold* (Harvard, 1947), p. 82.
30. R. C. Shaw, *Across the Plains in Forty-Nine* (Chicago, 1948), p. 151.
31. See David M. Potter, ed., *Trail to California: The Overland Journey of Vincent Geiger and Wakeman Bryarly* (New Haven, 1945), *passim*.
32. Elizabeth Page, ed., *Wagons West* (New York, 1930), p. 109.
33. Diary of William Chamberlain, July 22, 1849, Bancroft.
34. Nunis, *Letters of a Young Miner*, 18; Samuel Swearingen to his wife, August 31, 1851, Letters of Samuel Swearingen, CHS. Some miners apparently went to extraordinary lengths to avoid the onerous chore, sending their laundry to China to be washed, starched, and ironed. An example of this is cited by Brown, *Gentle Tamers*, 295.
35. Journal of Charles Kirkpatrick, May 14, 1849, Bancroft; S. B. F. Clark, *How Many Miles from St. Jo?* (San Francisco, 1929), p. 13; John Evans Brown, "Memoirs of an American Gold Seeker," *Journal of American History*, II (1908): 148.
36. Diary of Niles Searls, June 7, 1849, Bancroft.
37. Johnston, *Experiences of a Forty-Niner*, 132.
38. Delano, *Life on the Plains*, 64, 141.
39. Diary of Niles Searls, June 7, 1849, Bancroft.
40. Giffen, *Peter Decker*, 115.
41. "Diary and Reminiscences," Stephen T. Gage, May 22, 1852, in Borel Collection, Bender Room, Main Library, Stanford University.
42. Potter, *Geiger and Bryarly*, 94n.
43. Page, *Wagons West*, 94; Diary of W. W. Call, 1, Bancroft.
44. Charles Tuttle to his wife, March 28, 1849, Letters of Charles Tuttle, Bancroft; Giffen, ed., *Peter Decker*, 40; Journal of Albert K. Thurber, 17, Bancroft.
45. Walker D. Wyman, ed., *California Emigrant Letters* (New York, 1951), pp. 31-2.
46. Diary of Jasper Morris Hixson, 2, CHS.
47. Brown, "Memoirs . . .," 133; Potter, *Geiger and Bryarly*, 95.
48. Schafer, "California Letters of Lucius Fairchild," 19.
49. Diary of Henry Shombre, April 8, 1849, Bancroft.
50. Diary of George Jewett, December 25, 1849, Bancroft.
51. Florence Morrow Christman, ed., *One Man's Gold: The Letters and Journal of a Forty-Niner* (New York, 1930), p. 215.
52. Giffen, *Peter Decker*, 22.
53. "Memorandum Book, Vol. 1," W. N. Steuben, May 6, July 1, 1849, Bancroft.
54. McCoy, *Pioneering*, 39, 97.
55. Swearingen's guilt was assuaged when he was able to mentally reconstruct his son's face using one of the boy's curls sent by his wife. Nevertheless, Swearingen left the mines for home in late 1851. Swearingen to his wife, November 12, 1850 and March 9, 1851, Letters of Samuel Swearingen, CHS.
56. Grace Dell Stewart, ed., "The Dexter Hazen Hutchins Letters," *The Pacific Historian*, November, 1958, p. 6; Charles Tuttle to his wife, April 6, 1849, Letters of Charles Tuttle, Bancroft; Delano, *Life on the Plains*, 116.
57. Bidlack, *Letters Home*, 36-7, 42.
58. *Ibid.*, 35-6.
59. Page, *Wagons West*, 94, 99, 102, 207, 222.
60. David DeWolf, "Diary of the Overland Trail and Letters of Captain David DeWolf," *Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 1925, pp. 185, 192, 197, 217-9.
61. See, for example, Merrill Mattes, ed., "Alexander Ramsay's Gold Rush Diary of 1849," *Pacific Historical Review*, 18 (November, 1949): 451-2; Diary of Niles Searls, July 6, 1849, Bancroft; Henry Wiman to his parents, October 25, 1849, Letters of Henry Wiman, Bancroft.
62. Giffen, *Peter Decker*, 44, 58, 115.
63. Schafer, "California Letters of Lucius Fairchild," 1-2, 10, 19, 22, 38, 50, 197.
64. Brown, "Memoirs . . .," 153; McCoy, *Pioneering*, 40.
65. Eugene H. Roseboom, ed., "Charles Tinker's Journal: A Trip to California in 1849," *The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly*, January, 1952, p. 79; Diary of William Chamberlain, 11, Bancroft.
66. Lucy Foster Sexton, ed., *The Foster Family: California Pioneers* (Santa Barbara, 1925), p. 72.
67. DeWolf, "Diary of the Overland Trail," 186-7.
68. "Memorandum Book, Vol. 1," W. N. Steuben, August 14, 1849, Bancroft; Johnston, *Experiences of a Forty-niner*, 76.
69. Bidlack, *Letters Home*, 22-3.
70. Charles Tuttle to his wife, April 17, 1849, Letters of Charles Tuttle, Bancroft.



*At the McDonough Brothers' inauspicious bail bonds office on Clay and Kearny streets, the nearby Yellow Cab telephone figured prominently in the multifold operations.*

# "FOUNTAINHEAD OF CORRUPTION"

## Peter P. McDonough, Boss of San Francisco's Underworld

Residents of San Francisco between 1910 and 1941 nostalgically refer to those years as "the Golden Decades."<sup>1</sup> They remember living in the "gayest, lightest-hearted and most pleasure-loving city on the Western Continent."<sup>2</sup> The city's politics were dominated by two mayors, dashing "Sunny Jim" Rolph and affable Angelo Rossi, who presided over the city's destiny for thirty-two years beginning in 1911. The men remained almost universally popular throughout their terms at City Hall, always able "to provoke a spontaneous public ovation without sending runners ahead to make sure it was spontaneous."<sup>3</sup> There was good reason for their popularity: the three decades saw the city grow by over thirty percent to 635,000 residents, construct the nation's first municipally owned street-car system, build the massive Hetch Hetchy water project, host two gala world's fairs, and bridge the great Bay of San Francisco twice, each span being the largest of its kind in the world.

What is less often recalled is that just below the glamorous civic surface operated an equally vital element of the city's political life. It was a network of vice and graft

deeply rooted in tradition, one which prompted Democratic party boss Chris Buckley to caution in 1890, "Politics is not a branch of the Sunday school business."<sup>4</sup> Certainly it was more profitable. The 1935 Atherton Investigation of the San Francisco Police Department fixed the annual revenue from vice at between \$4 million and \$5 million and the volume of graft payments at \$1 million per year. Every bit as dominant in this branch of the city's life as Rolph and Rossi were in theirs was a single remarkable individual, Peter P. McDonough of McDonough Brothers' Bail Bond Brokers, for thirty years "the Fountainhead of Corruption" in San Francisco.<sup>5</sup>

Pete McDonough did not create the conditions which allowed his underworld empire to exist. He merely achieved dominance in the subterranean sphere when two disasters—the 1906 Earthquake and Fire and the graft prosecutions of Boss Abe Ruef and Mayor Eugene Schmitz—disrupted the long standing patterns of underworld politics in *fin de siècle* San Francisco. In a city where rebuilding became a mania and residents admonished each other, "Don't talk earthquake; talk business," the nationwide crusade for clean government died an early death. Quips such as the announcement that "in New York . . . there is still great difficulty in securing capital for San Francisco on account of the 'graft persecutions' as they call it there," speeded the demise of the

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*Pete McDonough simply gathered the scattered threads of the city's underworld political network into his hands and rewove an empire which included gambling, prostitution, bootlegging, and graft.*

---

Progressive good government movement. It seemed, in fact, that San Francisco "didn't really want to be cleaned up."<sup>7</sup> Accordingly Pete McDonough simply gathered the scattered threads of the city's underworld political network into his hands and rewove an empire which included gambling, prostitution, bootlegging, and graft. Secure in his position, he reigned as unchallenged "King of the Tenderloin" for a full quarter-century until the economic crisis produced by the Great Depression destroyed him.<sup>8</sup> As San Francisco madame Sally Stanford observed, "Nothing lasts that long unless the people are willing that it should."<sup>9</sup> Clearly the reasons for Pete McDonough's longevity and the changes which brought his demise reveal a good deal about the social and political life of San Francisco during the first third of this century.

Despite the occasional newspaper outburst against Pete and his brother and business partner Tom—"The McDonough Brothers must go"—Pete's power and influence remained remarkably constant if not obvious. Both of the city's major newspapers pretended that "San Francisco is the only large American city which has been free from organized crime, from racketeers, and from gangsters."<sup>10</sup> Although no one was ignorant of the existence of vice and graft, J. W. Ehrlich, whose activities as a criminal lawyer frequently brought him into conflict with the McDonough organization, observed, "San Francisco had convinced itself that vice was a necessary evil. There were many, as a matter of fact, who

weren't nearly as convinced that it was an evil as that it was necessary."<sup>11</sup> Popular demand therefore required a degree of civic sophistry on the part of local politicians. As Mayor "Sunny Jim" Rolph explained, "Vice can never be totally extinguished. I wish I could suppress it completely, but I can't." Comparing his city to other American and European cities, Rolph concluded, "San Francisco is superior to any of them in the matter of controlling and regulating vice."<sup>12</sup>

The result of this "understanding" attitude toward crime was a tacit agreement among city officials that the vice which existed in San Francisco would be a "home industry" presided over by local residents." In fact, eastern gangsters such as Al Capone found that "the more lucrative forms of crime were so highly organized and well protected that outsiders couldn't break into San Francisco."<sup>13</sup> This permitted San Francisco to avoid the horrors of gangland violence so common in cities like Chicago and New York in the same years. It seemed that as long as Pete McDonough managed the city's vice operations in a quiet, businesslike manner, no one in San Francisco was disposed to interfere.

Indeed there is little doubt that Pete McDonough looked upon himself as a successful businessman and that a sizeable segment of his fellow citizens accepted his view. When summoned before the grand jury considering evidence uncovered by the 1935 Atherton Investigation, McDonough "hardly appeared to be a master of the underworld." This childless widower of sixty years with white hair and pince-nez glasses presented a quiet, dignified appearance. In a well-tailored brown suit and vest, he appeared to be "a trim and snappily dressed man with a hard mouth and clever bright eyes under heavy white lids." Although he "stood out" in the distinguished group present at the hearing, newspapers described him as "the outward antithesis of the Machiavellian . . . string puller and power behind the scenes." Those who knew McDonough described him as "a soft-spoken, kindly and generous person whose chief relaxation was

his regular Wednesday night Turkish bath and whose personal life was above reproach."<sup>14</sup> A devout Catholic, he attended mass at Old St. Mary's Church on Grant Avenue each morning before going to his office and was a major contributor to several Catholic charities.<sup>15</sup> In many respects, his life was typical of the turn-of-the-century businessman who made his fortune pioneering a new product or service.

Pete McDonough was born in 1872, preceded by his brother Tom in 1870. His family lived in San Francisco's Cow Hollow (now the Marina) District. Patrick McDonough, the father of the two boys, had emigrated to San Francisco in 1859 and worked at a variety of jobs until 1868 when he joined the police department, serving "with credit" for twenty years. During his years with the department he became keeper of the city prison, where he was the officer charged with maintaining custody of the notorious stagecoach robber Black Bart. In 1888, Patrick McDonough became the first officer to receive a pension from the San Francisco Police Department. A year later he opened a saloon at the Old California Exchange on the corner of Clay and Kearney streets.<sup>16</sup>

Young Pete McDonough attended Sacred Heart College briefly, but he left school for a job as a cash boy at a men's haberdashery on the corner of Third and Market streets. Working diligently from nine to nine daily for \$3 a week, he received a promotion to the rank of salesman, a position which left him with a lifelong flair for fashionable dress. In 1894 Patrick McDonough vetoed Pete's desire to make the men's clothing business his career and ordered Pete to join his brother as an assistant keeper of the thriving family saloon.<sup>17</sup> The bar was a landmark which had survived the great fire of May 3, 1851, and the earthquake of 1869 to earn *Pacific Wine and Spirits Review's* commendation as "Frisco's Most Historic Saloon."<sup>18</sup> Whether due to its colorful past, the congeniality of its management, or its proximity to the Hall of Justice, "The Corner," as it was

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It was this clientele that made it possible for Pete McDonough to embark upon the business which made his fortune. As he later explained, "Many attorneys bought drinks here. As an accommodation we loaned some of them bail money for their clients without charge. We figured they'd all come in to buy drinks. Then we discovered the attorneys were charging their clients for the bail we put up. So we started working on bail bonds in between tending bar."

Gradually Pete, who seemed to be more of a businessman, concentrated exclusively on the bail bond business while Tom devoted his energy to operating the family saloon. In 1896 they organized the McDonough Brothers' Bail Bond Brokers firm, the first business of its kind in the United States.<sup>19</sup>

Pete McDonough monopolized the bail bond business in San Francisco and quickly earned a substantial fortune which he invested wisely. A friend of A. P. Giannini, he became a major stockholder of Giannini's Bank of Italy Corporation (later Bank of America).<sup>20</sup> By 1930 McDonough's fortune was estimated at between \$5 million and \$10 million.<sup>21</sup> He also married into the family of Mayor Angelo Rossi's executive secretary and acquired a measure of respect in the community.<sup>22</sup> A 1931 "Who's Who" of prominent San Franciscans observed, "McDonough Brothers have a reputation of being honest and ethical exponents of the business which

is their life's work, and their clientage is commensurate with the exceptional ability they have shown."<sup>23</sup> From this perspective Pete McDonough seemed to be a Horatio Alger character whose hard work and ingenuity resulted in his rise to wealth and prominence.

**I**t was in his drive to secure control of all of the bail bond business available in San Francisco that Pete McDonough began to step outside the law. He developed an organization which was remarkably successful in helping men accused of criminal activity avoid punishment. He secured the allegiance of a group of young attorneys who, lawyer Melvin Belli explained, found it necessary to "play ball" with McDonough Brothers in order to be successful in San Francisco.<sup>24</sup> The McDonough office became a clearing house which answered all the needs of an accused person, including bond and lawyer. But the thing which made a call to McDonough Brothers obligatory for anyone accused of criminal activity in San Francisco was information. Besides stationing functionaries of the firm at local, state, and federal courts, the McDonough organization created a remarkable network of informants who provided Pete McDonough with information about the needs of prospective clients. Policemen of all ranks could be seen visiting the McDonough office every day. Booking sergeants reportedly provided daily lists of who had been arrested, the charges, and the bail set.<sup>25</sup> It was even discovered at one point that a system of wirelasses connected the city prison, outlying jails, and the McDonough office.<sup>26</sup> As soon as information about arrests was received, Pete McDonough's nephew, Harry Rice, stepped outside the office and called to one of the four cab drivers who routinely "played the corner." The driver, who earned the right to serve the McDonoughs by being able to locate the city's superior court judges twenty-

four hours a day, was dispatched to obtain the judge's signature on an "OR" (order of release). This rapidly returned the McDonough client to freedom.<sup>27</sup>

Not all of this very efficient system was completely legal, as a variety of people pointed out throughout McDonough's career. As early as 1907 the city's police commission investigated the "bail bond game" and attacked McDonough's "illegal system of money-getting."<sup>28</sup> The US Department of Labor, while investigating a possible frame-up of Tom Mooney in the 1916 Preparedness Day Parade bombing, uncovered enough evidence to produce a major municipal scandal. Pete McDonough was accordingly named as "agent and instigator of most of the supposedly corrupt grand jury and police court intrigue."<sup>30</sup> Charges in 1920 of bribery involving McDonough and police judges Morris Oppenheim and John J. Sullivan produced criminal indictments, but no convictions. A good government group called the Women Volunteers enlivened the 1927 municipal election campaign by repeating the twenty-year-old charges that the district attorney's office was dominated by the "bail bond ring."<sup>31</sup> Although exposés produced screaming headlines, they never seriously threatened the "King of the Tenderloin." At one point, in fact, Pete McDonough boasted to the press that if the government ever "got anything" on him, he would donate \$10,000 to charity.<sup>32</sup>

The success of his organization in protecting those charged with crimes brought Pete McDonough into contact with people engaged in every branch of underworld activity. Gradually, McDonough Brothers became an agency which could provide underworld operators protection from arrest as well as protection after arrest. McDonough used his bail bond connections in the police department to expand into the "protection" business. However, evidence of McDonough's growing influence eventually seeped into the press. Gambling clubs operated by a "McDonough lieutenant" apparently paid police for "immunity from molestation."<sup>33</sup>



*The principal characters in the McDonough's 1923 bootlegging investigation: from left in the foreground, Pete, Tom, nephew Harry Rice, Maurice O'Callaghan, Jr., who testified against the Brothers, and Frank Sarrasseque, the bootlegger who unwittingly brought about the hearing.*



Prostitutes contributed 10 percent of their income to the McDonoughs and “as long as they paid they had immunity from arrest.”<sup>34</sup> A grand jury found that McDonough Brothers’ power had grown to the point of being a virtual licensing agency: “No one can conduct a prostitution or gambling enterprise in San Francisco without approval direct or indirect of the McDonough Brothers.”<sup>35</sup> Prohibition brought new opportunities, as the McDonough organization gained control of appointment of local enforcement agents and, according to the state director of prohibition, Samuel Rutter, “cleaned up in the neighborhood of \$600,000” in the process.<sup>36</sup> So pervasive was the organization’s influence that attorney “Jake” Ehrlich, who often fought the Brothers’ attempts to gain control of the city’s legal

profession, believed that “Tammany never ran New York City as completely as the McDonoughs ran the right to break the law in San Francisco.”<sup>37</sup>

So complete was McDonough’s dominance of the San Francisco underworld that his one conviction—in 1923 for bootlegging—produced one of the most remarkable documents in the city’s political history. Pete, Brother Tom, and Nephew Harry Rice had been arrested on April 25, 1923, when federal prohibition agents purchased two drinks at “The Corner” bar and five gallons of liquor from Rice’s garage.<sup>38</sup> Being “the biggest prohibition coup on the Pacific Coast,” the event caused prosecutor Kenneth M. Green, who obtained a conviction, to gloat, “At last McDonough is up against a prosecution he can’t corrupt.”<sup>39</sup> When McDonough

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*On election days, McDonough rounded up a gang of derelicts, offered each half a dollar bill before he voted, and presented him with the other half when he left the polls.*

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was sentenced to eighteen months in jail and a \$1,500 fine, many observers predicted that McDonough was finished.<sup>40</sup> As Mark Twain might have observed, however, reports of the king's death proved greatly exaggerated. When a series of appeals reaching all the way to the US Supreme Court failed, McDonough's attorney Marshall B. Woodworth announced, "The only hope left is an appeal for executive clemency." The resulting petition requesting a pardon for Pete McDonough presented to President Calvin Coolidge by Woodworth and former California Governor James N. Gillett was signed by an impressive list of San Francisco politicians, including the former governor, the secretary of state, Mayor James Rolph, three congressmen, one police commissioner, one judge of the appellate court, eleven superior court judges, two justices of the peace, four police judges, the city clerk, auditor, recorder, coroner, treasurer, tax collector, district attorney, three assistant district attorneys, and the vice-president of the Bank of Italy.<sup>41</sup> Although even this distinguished group could not keep McDonough out of jail, it indicated that McDonough's eight-month sentence would not seriously interfere with his influence in San Francisco.

Only the uninitiated were surprised at the extent of Pete McDonough's support among politicians; seasoned observers recognized him as the "most powerful political influence" in San Francisco.<sup>42</sup> The *Bulletin* believed that this influence was rooted in "a common rule of humanity: 'You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours'."<sup>43</sup> Certainly over the years McDonough became an expert back-scratcher. He first gained influence as a member of

the saloonmen's Knights of the Royal Arch, a lodge-like group which was "extremely political in nature."<sup>44</sup> Like many saloon-keepers, McDonough became an expert at "voting winos." On election days in the early years, he rounded up a gang of derelicts, offered each half a dollar bill before he voted, and presented him with the other half when he left the polls.<sup>45</sup>

Pete McDonough's buying of votes became more sophisticated by the late 1920s. In 1927 sheriff and long-time San Francisco political boss Tom Finn charged that McDonough had bet \$7,500 at odds of 1-3 against him, made-up 3,000 tickets at \$2.50-pays-\$10, and ordered his men to go "around town giving these tickets away. 'Vote for Fitzgerald [Finn's opponent] and here's \$10 for you' is what McDonough's henchmen are saying. Three thousand tickets means three thousand paid workers against me," pouted Finn.<sup>46</sup> Whether the charges were true or not, Fitzgerald staged a major upset in defeating Finn, and McDonough smiled knowingly in the background.

Pete McDonough was a valuable political ally because in the somewhat seamy world of San Francisco politics, as a national investigative commission observed, "The main contributions which make successful campaigns possible come from habitués of vice, gambling, and bootlegging resorts."<sup>47</sup> McDonough Brothers, noted attorney Jake Ehrlich, "performed vital functions at election time, and they served as fiduciary agents for statesmen too high up to stoop to face-to-face collections."<sup>48</sup> Exposés by the press charged that McDonough collected campaign funds to aid local and state politicians from the Ruef-Schmitz turn-of-the-century era through Angelo Rossi's pre-World War II administration.<sup>49</sup> The exact nature of arrangements varied, but the normal method was illustrated by a report in the *Bulletin* in 1910. A meeting between Mayor P. H. McCarthy's executive secretary, Elmore Leffingwell, and a "McDonough lieutenant," professional gambler Frank Daroux, was arranged at a French restaurant called the

Chantilly. By the conclusion of the meeting, Daroux was given permission to open two gambling clubs without police interference in exchange for a percentage of the revenue to wipe out a \$12,000 deficit incurred in McCarthy's 1909 campaign.<sup>50</sup>

**N**ot all of McDonough's power came through illegitimate deals. He also held political influence with a major voting bloc—organized labor. McDonough provided numerous bonds for union men who ran afoul of the law, and he was particularly generous in providing bail without charge to union men arrested during strikes. McDonough once said that his most prized possession was an ornately framed parchment with a gold seal which was presented to him by the carmen's union during the 1907-1908 streetcar strike. It read in part, "During the strike a great many union men went to jail. If it had not been for the McDonough Brothers many of the men might have been deprived unjustly of liberty. The McDonoughs rendered every possible service to our cause."<sup>51</sup>

Pete McDonough was also a frequent contributor to labor candidates' campaigns for public office.<sup>52</sup> Accordingly, organized labor did not fail to show its gratitude when McDonough himself was in trouble. When he faced a bribery charge in 1920, the Building Trades Council passed a resolution stating, "The attacks on . . . Peter McDonough are being directed by certain enemies of labor."<sup>53</sup> The Metal Trades Council passed a similar resolution.<sup>54</sup> During the effort to secure a presidential pardon after McDonough's bootlegging conviction, the San Francisco Labor Council issued a statement supporting the pardon and calling McDonough "at all times a valuable and consistent friend of organized labor."<sup>55</sup>

Pete McDonough's political muscle was often decisive

in elections, and it behooved local politicians to remain in his good graces. As a consequence, McDonough was able to crush most of his competition in the bail bond business, operate an extensive bootlegging empire, and preside over a network of "almost wide-open gambling and prostitution" without serious concern about local interference.<sup>56</sup> (His single conviction had resulted from a federal prosecution.) McDonough simply did not need to threaten anyone. He did not even need to ask anyone to help him. As demonstrated by the outpouring of support among local politicians for McDonough's petition of pardon, prospective candidates were only too happy to help out a major campaign supporter.

Beyond this relationship between McDonough and many figures in municipal government, the bail bondsman held a more sinister kind of power. The 1937 Atherton Investigation report charged that a police commissioner was "one of the mediums through which Peter P. McDonough exercised an important influence in department matters."<sup>57</sup> Within a week of the charge, the commissioner admitted that McDonough held his personal promissory note for \$20,000.<sup>58</sup> Shortly thereafter inquiries about the long friendship between McDonough and District Attorney Matthew Brady produced evidence that Brady owed McDonough \$1,100. Both men denied that the debts had influenced their conduct as public officials, but Brady admitted that if McDonough "can't get his clutches on a public official by buying him outright, he'll use any other means possible."<sup>59</sup> Whatever his tactics, by the mid-1930s Pete McDonough had become the "grand old man" of the San Francisco underworld.

The one variable of civic importance which McDonough could not control was the city's economy, and the most important reason for the city's tolerance of McDonough and his activities was the general affluence of the decades after the earthquake and fire. The hard times of the 1930s, however, shook the city out of its lethargy and helped conclude Pete McDonough's long





career. Economic collapse followed by massive unemployment and poverty were met by political leaders incapable of dealing with the problems. As the depression deepened, growing anxiety, fear, and hatred produced violence throughout the state. The Salinas and San Joaquin valleys erupted at the urgings of the communist Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union. The possibility that Upton Sinclair's radical EPIC (End Poverty in California) campaign might capture the Governor's Mansion in the 1934 election caused equal panic among many citizens. But the most dramatic evidence of the system's inability to cope with the economic

crisis of the 1930s came during the 1934 waterfront and general strikes. The shooting of strikers and the arrival of the national guard in the city signaled the collapse of familiar social, economic, and political relationships which had sustained the city for over two decades.

The leaders of the old order who had so long supported Pete McDonough found themselves discredited, and, in many cases, abandoned. Nationally, organized labor experienced a revolution leading to the formation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Harry Bridges' longshore and general strikes had been carried out at the expense not only of the shippers but of the



American Federation of Labor leadership of the Building and Metal Trades councils which had traditionally dominated San Francisco's labor politics. The increase in union membership which resulted from the 1934 strikes stirred new directions in the city's labor movement. Politically, this shift manifested itself in the rebirth of the state and local Democratic party. While organizers of Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1932 presidential campaign had been hard pressed to find a group of distinguished Democrats to greet the candidate when he visited San Francisco,<sup>60</sup> by 1938 a majority of the city's voters supported Culbert Olson, helping to make him

the first Democratic governor of California in the twentieth century. By the mid-thirties the leaders of the old order found themselves fighting for their political lives.

It was in this context that the investigation which ended Pete McDonough's reign as political boss of the San Francisco underworld was launched. In 1935, a former Federal Bureau of Investigation agent, Edwin N. Atherton, was brought to San Francisco to investigate the city's police department after an Internal Revenue Service collector announced that a police captain had been assessed back taxes because "he had built up a fortune, presumably in part, from payoffs from houses

of vice.”<sup>61</sup> Atherton’s subsequent investigation specifically named sixty-seven police officers and twenty-four city, state, and federal officials. Most significantly, Atherton reported that “McDonough Brothers was found to be a fountainhead of corruption willing to interest itself in almost any matter designed to defeat or circumvent the law.”<sup>62</sup> These charges produced spectacular headlines, but few thought the information new. Editorializing that “Atherton repeats rumors current here for ten to twenty years,”<sup>63</sup> the *Examiner* pointed out that McDonough’s activity “has been going on for thirty years.”<sup>64</sup> Certainly Pete McDonough was a past master at weathering such storms.

But this crisis was different. This time the *Examiner*’s demand to “Smash Pete McDonough!” was not only heard but acted upon.<sup>65</sup> Local politicians who in the past had rallied to McDonough’s support hung back; the city’s new political climate had them fighting for their political survival, and they “certainly could not be left holding the bag” for an unpopular cause.<sup>66</sup> The depression had changed the attitude of the previously tolerant citizenry, which seemed to one observer to have “gotten religion.”<sup>67</sup> Figures such as \$1 million in police graft and \$4-\$5 million a year in vice payments shocked people who were individually facing economic oblivion. What had been calmly accepted for a generation suddenly produced public outrage, and no public official with any instinct for survival dared step in the path of the investigation’s juggernaut. In November, 1937, it finally rolled over Pete McDonough when the state’s insurance commissioner stripped him of his bail bond license.<sup>68</sup>

Pete McDonough’s career was at an end. Spending the remaining years of his life trying to regain his license, he was able to secure a parade of notable San Franciscans as character witnesses at a series of insurance commission hearings, including Edmund G. Brown, Mayor Roger Lapham, future Mayor George Christopher, Atherton Grand Jury Foreman Marshall Dill, and Police Chiefs

William Quinn, Charles Dullea, and Michael Gaffey. Their testimony at one hearing caused Insurance Commissioner Anthony Caminetti to remark, “If you precede me to the pearly gates, Mr. McDonough, will you say a good word for me?”<sup>70</sup> But the commission never renewed McDonough’s license, and he never regained the incredible power over the city’s life he had wielded for a quarter-century.

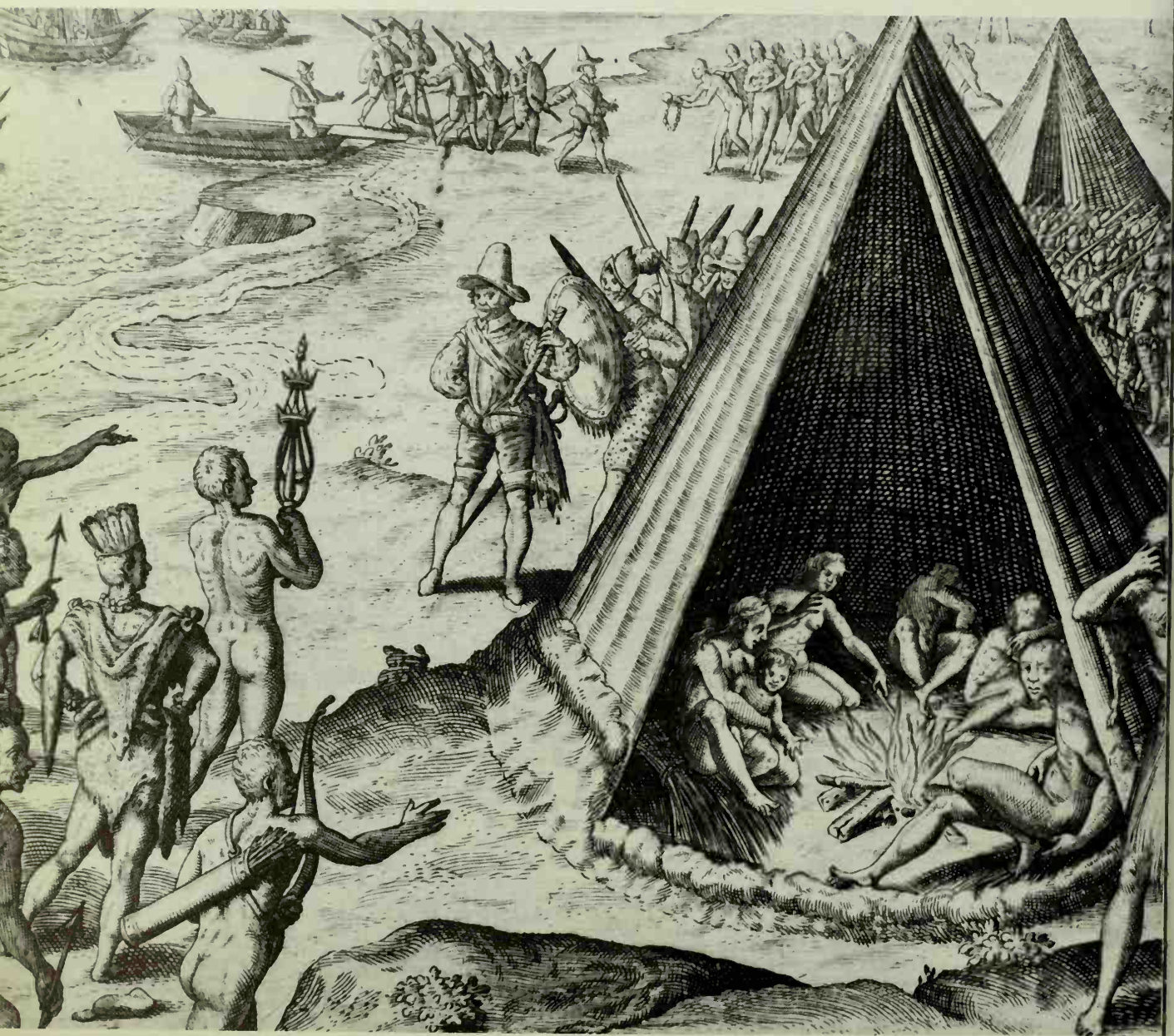
The photograph of the bail bond office is courtesy the *San Francisco Examiner*, October 17, 1947; the bootlegging investigation drawing is from the *Examiner*, May 5, 1923. The cartoons are from the *San Francisco News*, March 20 and 30, 1937.

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# LEGEND OF THE NICASIOS

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## the men Drake left behind at Nova Albion

When historian J. P. Munro-Fraser published his *History of Marin County* in 1880, he offered several reasons for believing that explorer and circumnavigator Francis Drake had landed in the ocean bay that bears his name. Among them, he wrote, was "an old Indian legend to the effect that Drake did land at this place, where some of his men deserted him, made their way into the country," and became "amalgamated with the aboriginals." This "tradition among the people with whom he met while here" is important because it provides a confirmation from Indian sources of a story which is implicit in several early European accounts. It suggests that there was a substantial discrepancy between the number of men who camped on the California coast at Nova Albion with Drake in June, 1579, and the number who departed with him for the East Indies a few weeks later.<sup>1</sup>

In the century following publication of the legend, it has been the subject of comment by several writers concerned with Drake's sojourn in California. In 1890 George Davidson was the first to mention it as evidence supporting his theory of a Drakes Bay anchorage. Other scholars, however, rejected it as having little evidentiary value. Among the notable critics were John W. Robertson, Henry R. Wagner, and Robert F. Heizer.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, although Wagner commented that this Indian legend could not represent "evidence of any value," he was nevertheless impelled to mention the "likelihood" that some of Drake's men had deserted him at Nova Albion and, further, that "it seems certain that at least ten men had disappeared after the ship left Guatulco" in Mexico and before reaching its next stop after leaving California.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Raymond Aker's 1971 work dealing with Drake in California reports the "extremely curious discrepancy in the number of

*Theodore de Bry's fanciful 1599 engraving (left) shows Drake's party pulling ashore (background) and being warmly greeted by curious natives, probably Coast Miwoks.*

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Warren Hanna is a member of the Sir Francis Drake Commission and the author of a new book, *Lost Harbor: The Controversy Over Drake's California Anchorage* (University of California Press, 1979). This article is adopted from the book chapter entitled "The Elizabethan Visitors."



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*What became of these people—a dozen or more—who traveled to California with Drake in June, 1579, but apparently did not leave with him . . . in July?*

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persons comprising Drake's company when he was last seen on the coast of Mexico and when the company was again recorded in the East Indies." Aker then proceeded to discuss the question of "what happened to those twenty or so people."<sup>4</sup>

Certainly Drake's journey through the North Pacific marked a turning point in his three-year voyage of plunder and exploration. When he reached the small port of Guatulco, one hundred miles south of Acapulco along the coast of Oaxaca, Mexico, he was at the midway point of his epic voyage in time and distance. He had completed the predatory phases of the long journey, and he was to capture no more ships, pillage no more settlements, take no more captives. It was time to turn his attention to the problem of finding his way back to England with his ship and its treasure intact.

The Spanish sailing instructions which he had captured informed him that the impending typhoon season made it too late to head across the Pacific to the East Indies. On the other hand, he dared not return by the way he had come because of the probability that the men of Spain, now fully alerted to his presence in the Pacific, would be lying in wait at South America's Straits of Magellan (as indeed they were). Finally, Drake's leaking ship was in need of repair. Weighing these factors, he thus charted a new course designed to bring him to the western entrance of the fabled Northwest Passage, if that waterway did exist, with an opportunity to repair the ship and rest his men somewhere en route.

As it turned out, unfavorable weather conditions off

the coast of what is now Oregon caused Drake to discontinue the search for the Northwest Passage and to seek a haven for the repair of his ship in what was described by a contemporary account<sup>5</sup> as a "fit and convenient harbor" somewhere in Northern California. Modern scholars have determined the site of his visit to have been in the region inhabited by the Coast Miwok Indians, that is, in one of the harbors along the perimeter of the Marin peninsula.<sup>6</sup> It is here that we join Drake, for it is at this harbor, it seems clear, that Drake's crew was strangely diminished.

The mysterious discrepancy in the size of Drake's crew is a subject that excites curiosity concerning its every aspect: what is the basis for believing that men were, in fact, left behind; how many were left; what were the reasons for their leaving the expedition, or being left; and what is the evidence, beyond the legend itself, to support this interesting explanation of their ultimate fate.

Anxious to end the English pirateering, the Spanish authorities took depositions from all Spanish citizens who had any contact with the dreaded Englishman Drake in the course of his voyage along the west coast of the Americas. They did likewise with Drake's cousin John, following his capture in Argentina in 1582, and also with Nuño da Silva, Drake's captured Portuguese pilot. One of the usual questions asked of the captives was how many men Drake had with him. The reported answers ranged from seventy-one or seventy-two, figures based on an actual count made surreptitiously by a captive named Nicolás Jorje, to eighty-six or eighty-seven, estimates that may have included three ship boys and two captive blacks.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the fact that most of the erstwhile prisoners placed the number of Drake's men before leaving Guatulco at eighty or more, circumstances suggest that these estimates were high.<sup>8</sup> Jorje's figures, the most conservative and the only ones produced from an actual count, are therefore taken as the best basis for compari-

son. For the numbers reported after the crew had left Nova Albion, there are two known figures—the first contained in a deposition by John Drake and giving the number as sixty,<sup>9</sup> the second from Drake's *The World Encompassed* and placing the number at fifty-eight. Comparing *The World Encompassed*'s figure with the earlier count of seventy-one or seventy-two, there remains a discrepancy of thirteen or fourteen people to be accounted for, exclusive of the black captives who were put ashore on an island in the East Indies.<sup>10</sup>

**T**his startling information gives rise to several questions: what became of these people—a dozen or more—who traveled to California with Drake in June, 1579, but apparently did not leave with him when the *Golden Hind* departed for the Moluccas in July? Secondly, why did the various contemporary accounts neither explain or mention this substantial discrepancy?

To answer the second of these two queries, one can only speculate that if the men who failed to depart from Nova Albion on the *Golden Hind* were deserters, Drake would not have wanted that fact to be admitted or become known. If the men were left by some agreement, their position in Spanish America would have made them vulnerable to enemy attack if information as to their whereabouts was permitted to be published or to leak out.

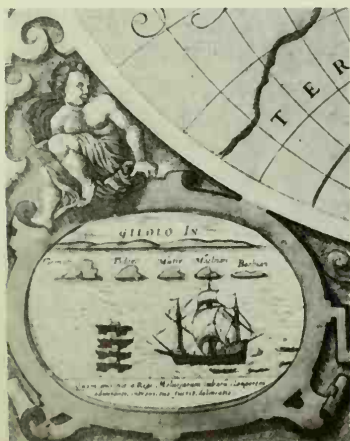
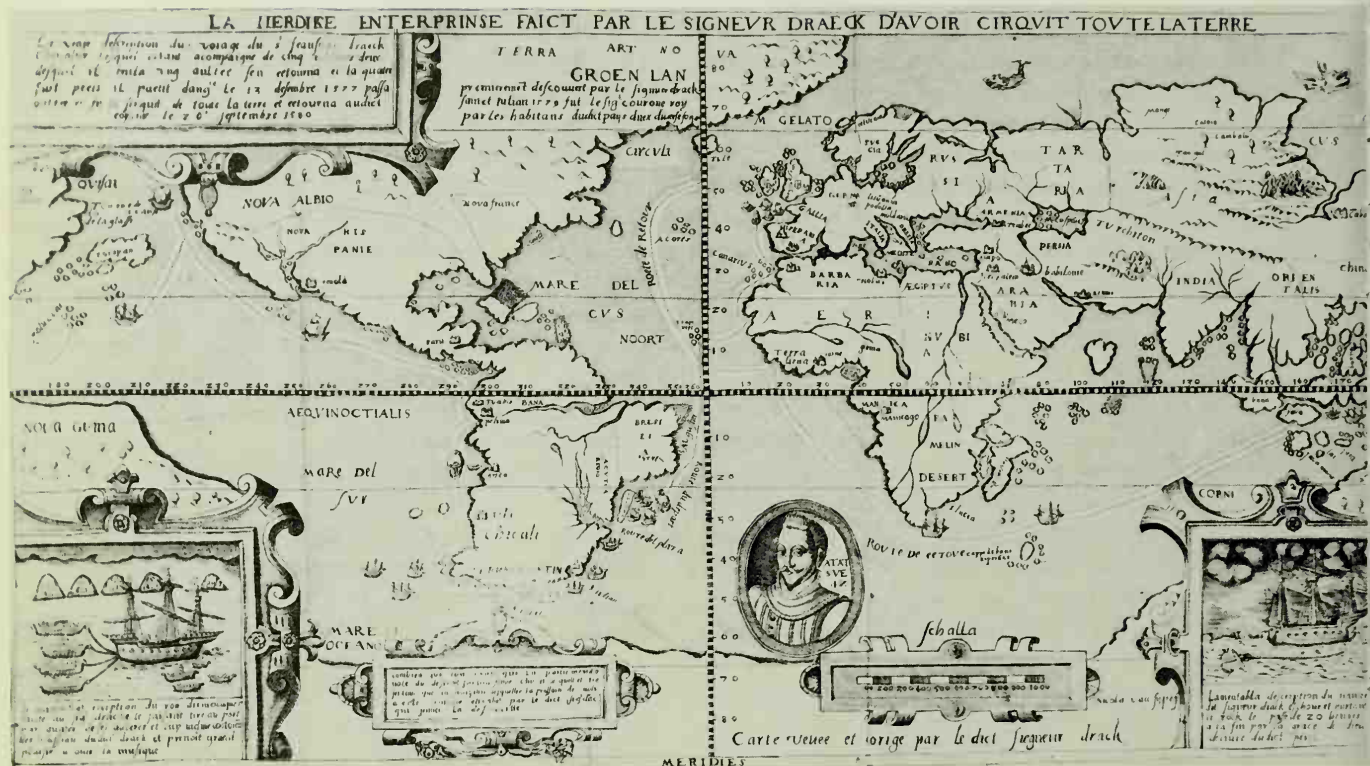
The first question—what became of the dozen or more people who came to Nova Albion but did not leave with Drake—is a broader one, requiring a greater latitude of imagination to suggest answers. Perhaps, we may guess, malcontented crew members deserted Drake. The possibility of dissension or mutiny was an ever-present hazard on lengthy early voyages, and Ferdinand Magellan also had to deal with the problem in the first circumnavigation. Drake himself was known to have

had his difficulties, first with the mutinous Thomas Doughty and later with the deserter John Winter, captain of Drake's second ship, the *Elizabeth*. Even the Spanish coast explorer Sebastian Cermeño was threatened with revolt from the time he first sighted the Pacific Coast in November, 1595.<sup>11</sup>

Another possible explanation for fewer crew members would be that some voluntarily remained behind. They might have done so because of (a) lack of space on the *Golden Hind* (two ships were needed on the last leg of the journey to California);<sup>12</sup> (b) unwillingness to risk the perils of the long Pacific voyage in a frail and heavily laden ship; (c) a bribe by Drake to remain for a time with the small frigate they had captured and some silver or other valuable cargo; and even (d) seemingly hopeless illness.

It is perhaps difficult, four hundred years after the event, to imagine any Drake crewman willingly remaining on that bleak and lonely coast or bay, no matter how friendly and worshipful the Indians may have seemed. On the other hand, it is not difficult to visualize the terror the men may have felt at the prospect of faring forth into the wild and unknown Pacific in such a frail and overcrowded vessel as the *Golden Hind*. Drake could give no assurance that the boat's leaky condition would not recur at any time or longitude and bring death to all aboard. Today we can only speculate about the crewmen's motivation, or about the promises which may have been made in consideration of their remaining at Nova Albion.

There is fairly dependable evidence to indicate that at least one member of the Drake party, Pilot N. de Morena, stayed behind at his own request after pleading desperate illness and then staged a miraculous recovery and made his way to Mexico on foot.<sup>13</sup> Others may have undertaken a similar course of action but perished, or reached civilization without having their return recorded. Or they may have tried to sail the small second ship back to some friendly harbor, but without success.



*This Dutch map (above) shows the route of Drake's voyage of circumnavigation. It is based on the 1589 map by Jodocus Hondius titled, "Vera Totius Expeditionis Nauticae." The detail (left) from the Hondius map features two drawings of the Golden Hind and its even smaller satellite vessels on which were crowded some 164 people.*



After the Nicasio legend had first been published by Munro-Fraser, its next mention occurred a decade later when George Davidson, in his first treatise dealing with Drake in California, included a paraphrased version of only part of it:

Among the Nicasio Indians of the Nicasio Valley, which lies fifteen miles to the eastward of Drake's Bay, there is said to have been a tradition to the effect that Drake anchored in the Bay, and landed on these shores; that some of his crew deserted and lived among the Indians; and that he gave the natives some seeds for planting; and among other things some hard ship-biscuit which they innocently planted in the hope of similar bread growing therefrom.<sup>14</sup>

This abbreviated version of the legend suited Davidson's purposes since it not only placed the *Golden Hind* in Drakes Bay, but also enabled Davidson to argue against a San Francisco Bay anchorage on the ground that from the latter location Drake would have had no contact with the Indians living in Nicasio.<sup>15</sup> However, from Munro-Fraser, the source of Davidson's information, comes the following, more complete story:

The Indians also state that some of Drake's men deserted him here, and making their way into the country, became amalgamated with the aboriginals to such an extent that all traces of them were lost, except possibly a few names which are to be found among the Indians. "Winnemucca," for instance, is a purely Celtic word, and the name "Nicasio," "Novato," and others are counterparts, with slight variations, of names and places on the island of Cyprus.<sup>16</sup>

Although the Nicasio legend as a whole was given little credence by scholars, including Wagner and Heizer, its reference to some of Drake's men remaining behind meshes with another more reliable story from the Juan Crespi expedition, which explored the San Francisco Bay Area in March, 1772. While doing research in Mexico, Wagner located a map of the Bay Area drawn from the diary and field notes of Father Crespi. The map's inscription, according to John Robertson, noted: "Around this bay the natives were found to be red-

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*Bearded and fair-skinned natives had been reliably reported as having been encountered around San Francisco Bay by Crespi in 1772.*

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headed, bearded and fair complectioned. They were very good and friendly, and they made gifts of fruit and food to the Spaniards."<sup>17</sup> Evaluating this information in his treatise on Drake, Robertson reported:

The bearded, reddish-haired and fair-skinned (*barbados, rubios y blancos*) Indians that they found on this bay shore would be an excellent argument for those putting faith in Indian legends of the White Gods who visited them, had they been found in the bays near Point Reyes or in the port of Trinidad, even though 200 years and many Spanish sailors had intervened.<sup>18</sup>

Robertson appears to have been the only Drake scholar to print the Crespi map and information. He commented skeptically on its value in relation to the Nicasio legend, which he discussed in some depth, and he emphasized what he believed were inconsistencies on the subject of the Drake crew members. For all his diligence, however, Robertson made two errors in his discussion of the subject. He mistranslated "*rubios*" as "red-haired" rather than "blond," and the phrase "*rubios, blancos y barbados*" therefore means "blond, fair-skinned (or white) and bearded." Secondly, instead of verifying what Munro-Fraser had said, Robertson merely repeated Davidson's inadequate synopsis of the legend and proceeded to base his own comments on these faulty premises.<sup>19</sup>

Despite his mistranslation of the word *rubios*, Robertson was certainly aware that bearded and fair-skinned natives had been reliably reported as having been encountered around San Francisco Bay by Crespi in 1772.

*Overcrowding of the crew became a severe problem when two of Drake's ships became unseaworthy. The Golden Hind, a replica of which is shown here, carried treasure as well as supplies for the long voyage across the Pacific.*



Consequently, it would seem that Robertson had been deserted by his usually logical mind when he ruled out any possibility of a valid basis for the Nicasio legend. In any event, his reasoning on the subject is so palpably erroneous as to invite the following point-by-point critical analysis.

(1) Robertson asserted that the Indians, whom he called "ignorant and unlettered troglodytes," could not have passed the name of Drake down through eight generations.<sup>20</sup> Such an assertion was obviously based on the assumption that no crew members were left behind, and that "Drake" was therefore a word unlikely to have survived the passage of time among a primitive tribe which had heard it only briefly in 1579. Such a conclusion, however, lacks validity if fifteen or twenty crew members had remained in California, had joined the tribe, and had continued (as would have been natural) to hand down the name of Drake by word of mouth through succeeding generations of their offspring.

(2) Robertson also claimed that the Indians could not have differentiated between Drake's sailors and those of the explorer Cermeño, or other sailors who occasionally stopped at Bodega or Drakes Bay.<sup>21</sup> But no such dif-

ferentiation would have been necessary. The hostility of the Indians encountered by Cermeño in 1595 would have made amatory adventures unlikely and desertion unattractive. Northern California went unvisited by Europeans during all the years between 1595 and 1740 to 1750, the years when the fair-skinned adults seen in 1772 by Crespi were probably born. Robertson's assumption that other sailors stopped at Bodega or Drakes Bay during that lengthy interval was an erroneous one.

(3) Robertson reported that no ethnological evidence exists of white men having adventures with the "overfriendly and worshipping Indian women."<sup>22</sup> On the contrary, such evidence was presented by Robertson himself in the form of the Crespi records. Moreover, the reference in those records to "the natives" encountered (rather than to "some of the natives" or to "an occasional native") suggests a substantial infusion of European blood into the tribe. This would be expected if a dozen deserters had "become amalgamated with the aboriginals," but not if only a few amatory adventures had occurred because of the briefness of the Drake and Cermeño sojourns.

(4) If there had been any desertion from the English crew, Robertson wrote, Drake's chaplain Francis Fletcher, who was "so verbose as to the minute incidents that happened between the sailors and the Indians, would have made some note of such an occurrence."<sup>23</sup> On the contrary, Fletcher, verbose though he may have been about some things, carefully avoided mention of anything that might reflect unfavorably upon the expedition. Such topics as Drake's black woman Maria, and the amatory adventures of the crew were certainly taboo to the straitlaced parson. Furthermore, Drake himself would have regarded desertion as defiance of his authority and would have forbidden mention of the subject in any official account.

(5) Robertson also wrote that if a group of Drake's sailors had deserted, mestizos, or persons of mixed European and American Indian ancestry, would have been encountered by later parties, and association with white men would have been evident in many ways.<sup>24</sup> But Robertson seemingly shut his eyes to the fact that mestizos *were* encountered, these being the bearded, fair-skinned natives that, according to Crespi, were kind to the Spaniards in 1772. Robertson was presumably unaware, too, that other early visitors to Northern California had reported contacts with blond Indians. The journal entry of Father Francisco Palou dated November 29, 1774, told of meeting, near what is now San Carlos on the San Francisco peninsula, a group of "well formed Indians of tall stature, many of them fair and well-bearded, as much so as any Spaniard." Four days later, in the vicinity of the present San Bruno, the Palou party was visited by another group of twenty-four Indians, "most of them bearded and some of them fair."<sup>25</sup>

Had he become familiar with all of these references as well as the full text of the legend itself, even Robertson might have conceded that the reports support the Indian legend's reference to "amalgamation with the aboriginals."<sup>26</sup> The blond, bearded natives reported by Crespi and Palou were obviously mestizos. From the standpoint

of physical appearance and numbers encountered, the evidence suggests a substantial infusion of European blood into the tribe several generations earlier. It also suggests that an awareness of their heritage, intuitive or otherwise, may have been a factor in their attraction to the white strangers, as evidenced by their seeking out of the Spaniards and their friendly gifts of food and fruit.

Of the 164 people who left Plymouth, England, with Drake in December, 1577, under the illusion that they were embarking on a voyage of relatively moderate duration and peril, scarcely more than 100 were ever to see England again.<sup>27</sup> The captain and crew of Drake's *Marigold*, 29 in all, perished in a storm near the Straits of Magellan in September, 1578. Men numbering 7 succumbed to enemy action, 7 to hardships and privation, 2 to illness, and 1 to the executioner's ax. Another 3 made it back to civilization on their own, accounting for a total of 49 who did not return to England with Drake or on the *Elizabeth* with Captain Winter.<sup>28</sup>

The 71 or 72 people on the *Golden Hind* in the spring of 1579 (reflecting the count made by the prisoner Jorje), added to the 49 enumerated above, would account for 120 or 121 of the original company of 164, and thus leave 43 or 44 as the number returning on the smaller *Elizabeth*. With all the factors of the equation thus identified and evaluated, we need only to combine the *Elizabeth*'s contingent (43 or 44) with the number returning on the *Golden Hind* (58) and those returning to civilization on their own or not at all (49) to realize from the resulting total of 150 or 151 that 13 or 14 of the original 164 men are still unaccounted for. This confirms our earlier and simpler computation (Jorge's 71 or 72 minus *The World Encompassed*'s 58).

The consistency of the foregoing figures suggests the need for study of other evidence pertinent to the fate of



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*The first indication that a problem existed  
... was Drake's otherwise inexplicable  
ordering of eight men into a small open boat.*

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Drake's crew members. It has not been generally realized that Drake's vessel was severely overcrowded—a problem that was to trouble him much of the time in the Pacific. On five different occasions while in the great ocean he banished an individual or group from the *Golden Hind* to the relative insecurity of a smaller satellite vessel, or left them behind in an alien environment, and not until he reached the Celebes area did he rid himself fully of the problem.<sup>29</sup>

The nagging difficulty resulting from overcrowding had its inception in 1578 when two of Drake's ships became unseaworthy and had to be broken up or abandoned. Their crews were redistributed among the other three ships, the majority of these displaced seamen probably being reassigned to the *Golden Hind*, the largest of the three vessels.<sup>30</sup> Although Drake himself was thus responsible for adding a substantial number of men to the already full crew of his ship, he may not then have appreciated the extent of the problem that he had created for himself, or have had any idea that within little more than a year he might be reducing the number of those on board by twenty persons or more.

The first indication that a problem existed, so far as the early accounts were concerned, was Drake's otherwise inexplicable ordering of eight of his men into a small open boat "to waite upon the ship for all necessary uses." Soon after this event in October, 1578, "foule weather suddenly arising" caused the men to lose sight of the *Golden Hind*, and they were never reunited.<sup>31</sup> Despite this tragedy and the loss of more lives in enemy action along the Chilean coast, a substantial human over-

load continued, aggravated by the taking aboard of several captives and the acquisition of a heavy cargo of gold, silver, and other Spanish loot.

It was not until Drake reached Central America that another opportunity to provide relief from the crowded conditions on the *Golden Hind* presented itself. In March, 1579, a small Spanish frigate engaged in coastwise service and not designed for long ocean voyages was taken from one Rodrigo Tello near the island of Caño. The mere fact that Drake pressed into service a ship with an estimated capacity of fourteen persons for a sixty-day voyage in the wake of the *Golden Hind* makes it obvious that he felt it necessary to reduce the number on board forthwith—even if only temporarily. Manning the frigate with members of the *Hind*'s crew, Drake then directed the two ships on the 4,000-mile voyage that was to bring them to California. Viewed realistically, Drake's bold action would solve the overcrowding problem: temporarily, if the small frigate miraculously survived the rigorous voyage, and permanently, if it did not.

The frigate, we know, did reach California and went no further, but a variety of questions beg to be answered. If the capacity of an additional ship was required for the shorter Mexico-to-California trip, how could the *Golden Hind* alone accommodate not only all the people but all the food, water, and supplies required for the long transpacific voyage? Was it mere coincidence that the frigate's carrying capacity—about fourteen—corresponded closely with the number of men unaccounted for after Drake had left Nova Albion? Could it have been that Drake consciously manned the second vessel with the members of his crew that could best be spared in the event the small boat failed to survive? Or that such a selection would have served the same purpose if the frigate would reach California and a reduction of personnel would then have to be made? If the frigate's crew, or others, were the ones who volunteered or were ordered to remain in California, were they influenced



*Drake unhesitatingly ordered men into an open boat on the ocean, put ashore his pilot in Mexico, and abandoned captives on a waterless island. This portrait of the captain-pirate is attributed to Jodocus Hondius.*

by promises from Drake of a special share of the captured treasure, and that he would return for them on his next voyage? Was Drake so ruthless that he deliberately abandoned a dozen or more of his crew halfway around the world—with or without promises?

Firm answers to these questions are not available. However, evidence suggests that Drake would not have hesitated to leave some of his men at Nova Albion if he felt the success of the enterprise required it. It is likely that he would have acted with no more compunction than he had shown in ordering eight of his men into an open boat on the ocean, knowing that they might well be lost in the event of a storm (as they in fact were); with no more compassion than he had shown in putting ashore

in Mexico his Portuguese pilot, Nuño da Silva, knowing that it could mean torture or death by the Spaniards;<sup>32</sup> and with no more mercy than he was later to show in abandoning three recently captured blacks, including a pregnant woman named Maria, on a remote and waterless island in the East Indies.<sup>33</sup>

As for the legend of the Nicasios, the figures cited herein do not necessarily prove that there were a dozen or more Elizabethans who did not leave Nova Albion.<sup>34</sup> Nor do the reports of Crespi and Palou necessarily establish that England's first colony in the New World was actually on Pacific shores. The evidence, although persuasive, remains circumstantial. It can do no more than provide a plausible and fascinating basis for con-

jecture about how Drake may have finally solved his problem of shipboard crowding and what may have happened to those stay-behinds, if any, who did not find their way overland to Mexico, or sail away to a watery grave in the small ship we know Drake abandoned at Nova Albion.

The de Bry engraving is from *Americae, Pars VII* (Frankfurt, 1599). The Dutch map, drawn by Nicola van Henrike, appeared in *Le Voyage Curieux . . .* (1641). The Drake portrait was supplied by the author and the other photographs are from the CHS Collections.

## Notes

1. J. P. Munro-Fraser, *History of Marin County* (San Francisco, 1880), pp. 96, 97, 98. On p. 96 Munro-Fraser speaks of "an old Indian legend which came down through the Nicasios." Alfred L. Kroeber's *Handbook of the California Indians* makes no reference to a tribe or sub-tribe by that name, and it must be assumed that Munro-Fraser was speaking of members of the Coast Miwok tribe living in the village of Nicasio. The sole source of the Nicasio legend is Munro-Fraser, and every writer's discussion of it relates back, directly or indirectly, to that source.
2. George Davidson, *Identification of Sir Francis Drake's Anchorage...* (San Francisco, 1890), p. 35; John Robertson, *Francis Drake and Other Early Explorers Along the Pacific Coast* (San Francisco, 1927), pp. 221, 222 and 226; Henry Wagner, *Sir Francis Drake's Voyage Around the World* (San Francisco, 1926), pp. 148, 167; Robert F. Heizer, *Elizabethan California* (Ramona, California, 1974), pp. 78-79.
3. Wagner, *Drake's Voyage*, 148.
4. Raymond Aker, "Report of Findings Relating to the Identification of Sir Francis Drake's Encampment at Point Reyes National Seashore" (1971), cf. pp. 330-342.
5. *The World Encompassed by Sir Francis Drake* (London, 1628).
6. Heizer, *Elizabethan California*, p. 80. The Coast Miwok tribe's homeland comprises Marin County and the southern part of Sonoma County. The only harbor in Sonoma that might have served Drake as an anchorage was Bodega Bay, while Marin County had eight such bays or harbors.
7. Zelia Nuttall, *New Light on Drake* (London, 1914), pp. 137, 181, 186. Nicolas Jorje was a prisoner on the *Golden Hind* from February 5 to March 5, 1579. In addition to the two black men, a young black woman named Maria was subsequently made a captive.
8. If there were 86 or 87 men on board, having previously lost 5 to enemy action and 8 in an open boat in a storm in September, 1578, Drake would have had to have 100 on board the *Golden Hind* when it arrived in the Pacific, which is a physical impossibility. This reason, and the natural tendency of prisoners to exaggerate, suggests that such estimates cannot be made to jibe with the actual number of personnel of the three ships.
9. Nuttall, *New Light on Drake*, 32, 52. Nuttall mistakenly translated John Drake's first deposition to mean that Drake had lightened his ship in the Moluccas "by reducing their company to sixty men." Fortunately, Wagner, *Drake's Voyage*, p. 181, corrected this error by pointing out that "all John Drake said was that they were only sixty in number" and that there was no "evidence that Drake left any men at Ternate." To the same effect as Wagner was the translation given by Lady Elliot-Drake in *The Family and Heirs of Sir Francis Drake* (London, 1911), 2: 357.
10. Nuttall, *New Light on Drake*, 32.
11. Drake Navigators Guild, "Nova Albion Rediscovered: Nautical Research Aids in the Identification of Francis Drake's Encampment" (Point Reyes, 1956), p. 15, states, "We may readily believe there was suppressed and even open discontent in the incongruous, closely packed company on his ship, only to be understood and appreciated by those who have made long sea voyages." Thomas Doughty, after being found guilty of fomenting mutiny among the crews, was beheaded by Drake's order at Port San Julian. Cermeño was captain of a Spanish ship, the *San Agustin*, which was assigned to explore the California coast for harbors for ships trading between the Philippines and Acapulco. While in the present Drakes Bay in November, 1595, the *San Agustin* was wrecked.
12. Drake captured a small vessel belonging to Rodrigo Tello on March 20, 1579. According to Nuttall, *New Light on Drake*, 184, it was necessary for Drake to strengthen the vessel to make it fit for a longer voyage.
13. The story of de Morena's adventures was reported in the February, 1900, issue of *Land of Sunshine*, XII:3.
14. Davidson, *Identification of Drake's Anchorage*, 35.
15. *Ibid.*, 57.
16. Munro-Fraser, *History of Marin County*, 97.
17. The map was reproduced in color in Robertson, *Francis Drake Along the Pacific Coast*, 255 ff.
18. *Ibid.*, 225.
19. *Ibid.*, 221.
20. *Ibid.*, 222.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*, 226.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*
25. Frank M. Stanger and Alan K. Brown, *Who Discovered the Golden Gate?* (San Mateo, 1969), pp. 137, 141.
26. Robertson implied that the legend might have had credibility



if the blond natives seen by Crespi had been encountered near Point Reyes instead of around the Bay. In effect, one of his reasons for rejecting the legend was that the mestizos were encountered elsewhere than in certain parts of Marin County.

There are several possible answers to this view of the evidence: (1) The legend as reported by Munro-Fraser did not limit the area where Drake's crewmen finally came to rest as being near Point Reyes or Nicasio. It stated only that they made their way "into the country," which could have been anywhere on the Marin peninsula or in the Bay Area. (2) The straight-line distance from Nicasio to San Francisco is less than twenty-five miles, not too difficult a venture for the Drake crewmen and their offspring to have made in the course of two centuries. (3) Recent evidence suggests that the Costanoan Indians, who peopled the San Francisco area when the Spaniards first arrived, may also have occupied a part of the eastern shores of Marin County in pre-mission days, thus possibly accounting for the crewmen's descendants having moved to the Bay Area south of the Golden Gate where they were encountered by Palou. (4) What other way is there to explain the Crespi-Palou encounters? Apart from the Cermeño visit in 1595, no other white men are known to have set foot on Northern California soil prior to 1769. None of the Cermeño crew remained behind, and there is no other way to account for the mestizos seen by Crespi and Palou except on the basis of the legend of the Nicasios.

27. Derek Wilson, *The World Encompassed* (New York, 1977), p. 211, estimates that about half of the original complement of 164 on the voyage survived. This author's computation, however, as outlined herein, places the number of survivors at about 104.
28. N. M. Penzer, ed., *The World Encompassed and Analogous Contemporary Documents* (London, 1926), p. 139, indicates that Preacher Fletcher had reported the number lost on the *Marigold* at "28 soules," in addition to Captain Edward Bright.

Three men returned to civilization by themselves. John Fry was captured off the coast of Morocco but later returned to England. Peter Carder made his way over land and sea from the vicinity of the Straits of Magellan to England, arriving in 1586 (see Wagner, *Drake's Voyage*, 83-84). Pilot de Morena traveled on foot from Nova Albion to Mexico, arriving there about 1583.

No record exists of the number or identity of the men who returned to England on the *Elizabeth* with Captain Winter. The deserter Winter had the distinction of being the first to negotiate the Straits of Magellan from west to east. According to John Drake, Winter was imprisoned for deserting Drake and would have been hung but for the latter's intercession (Nuttall, *New Light on Drake*, 27).

29. Eight men were ordered into an open boat in October, 1578; the pilot Nuño da Silva was put ashore at Guatulco; a dozen or more men were ordered to man Rodrigo Tello's captured frigate for the journey from Mexico to California; the pilot

N. de Morena apparently left the ship at Nova Albion and walked back to Mexico; and three blacks captured off the coast of South or Central America were put ashore on Crab Island in the East Indies. These five events do not take into account the disappearance of other crew members who may have been left at Nova Albion.

The explanation given by John Drake for the marooning of the three blacks was to "found a settlement." Obviously, the real purpose was to avoid having an infant on board the ship for the final nine months of its voyage.

30. The accounts do not explain how the personnel of these two ships were reassigned. Indications are that Drake transferred most of them to the *Golden Hind*, which may have had ninety or more persons on board when it emerged from the Straits of Magellan in September, 1578.
31. Nuttall, *New Light on Drake*, 42, tells of this incident as reported in Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimes in Five Bookes* (London, 1625), part IV. Among the eight men thus abandoned to their fate, only Peter Carder succeeded in returning to England. The others perished after enduring the most severe privation and hardship.
32. In 1579 and 1580, da Silva was subjected to four depositions, two of them before the infamous Spanish Inquisition. As a Portuguese who had been associated with Drake for over a year, his reception by the Spaniards was not friendly.
33. The so-called "Anonymous Narrative" reported that Maria had been "gotten with childe between the captaine and his men pirates," and by the time they reached Celebes in November, 1579, she had become "very great." Wagner, *Drake's Voyage*, 271.
34. See also Aker, "Report of Findings," 333-334, for a discussion of why "there is good reason to conjecture that the missing members of Drake's crew remained at Nova Albion."

# ***“He did not have a fair trial”***

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## **California Progressives React to the Leo Frank Case**

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Historians have mined the Progressive Era almost to exhaustion. During the past quarter-century they have completed an enormous amount of research on the years 1900-1917, and with few exceptions, no period in American history has spawned so much original and incisive scholarship.<sup>1</sup> Yet despite the rich abundance of the literature, the Leo Frank case, one of the most sensational criminal prosecutions of the era, has attracted little attention. To be sure, Leonard Dinnerstein has written what has rightfully been considered the classic work on the subject,<sup>2</sup> but historians have failed to analyze the relationship of the case to broader concerns in America at the time and have thus far lost an opportunity to shed additional light on what one scholar has called “that rather elusive abstraction, the progressive mind.”<sup>3</sup> Indeed few events of the period open a more revealing window on the spirit and motivation behind progressivism than the Leo Frank trial and its aftermath.

This is particularly true in the case of California. Although thousands of miles from Atlanta, Georgia, where the trial took place, Californians reacted strongly to the ordeal of Leo Frank, and in so doing they revealed a good deal about themselves. In fact the trial and its consequences occurred at a time when California stood almost alone in the progressive column.<sup>4</sup> As historian George Mowry has pointed out, with the exception of California, the progressive defeat in the elections of

1914 “had been almost total.”<sup>5</sup> In other words, during the early years of World War I, California was still involved in airing and debating reform issues, many of which were brought more clearly and dramatically to the surface by the Leo Frank case. Such matters as capital punishment, child labor, the role of women in society, law and order, and anti-Semitism were just several of the key problems given new impetus by the trial in Atlanta. What remains to be determined, therefore, is how California progressives—Progressive Republicans or Wilsonian Democrats—reacted within the context of the Frank case to these long-standing but recently revived issues. Did the progressive reaction, for example, differ from the so-called conservative one?<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, what role did the highly influential (but historiographically neglected) California Jewish community play in this struggle to gain justice for Frank, a fellow Jew? And finally, how does one account for the extraordinarily strong support which California as a whole expressed for Frank?

Any attempt to answer these questions must begin with the Frank case itself. Leo M. Frank, the son of a prosperous New York merchant, had arrived in Atlanta to manage the National Pencil Factory, a business in which he had a small financial interest. Like many other industries of the period, the factory employed young girls at low wages. When one of these employees, thirteen-year-old Mary Phagan, was found beaten and murdered in the basement of the factory, rumor linked Frank with the crime. On April 29, 1913, three days after the murder occurred, Frank was arrested and

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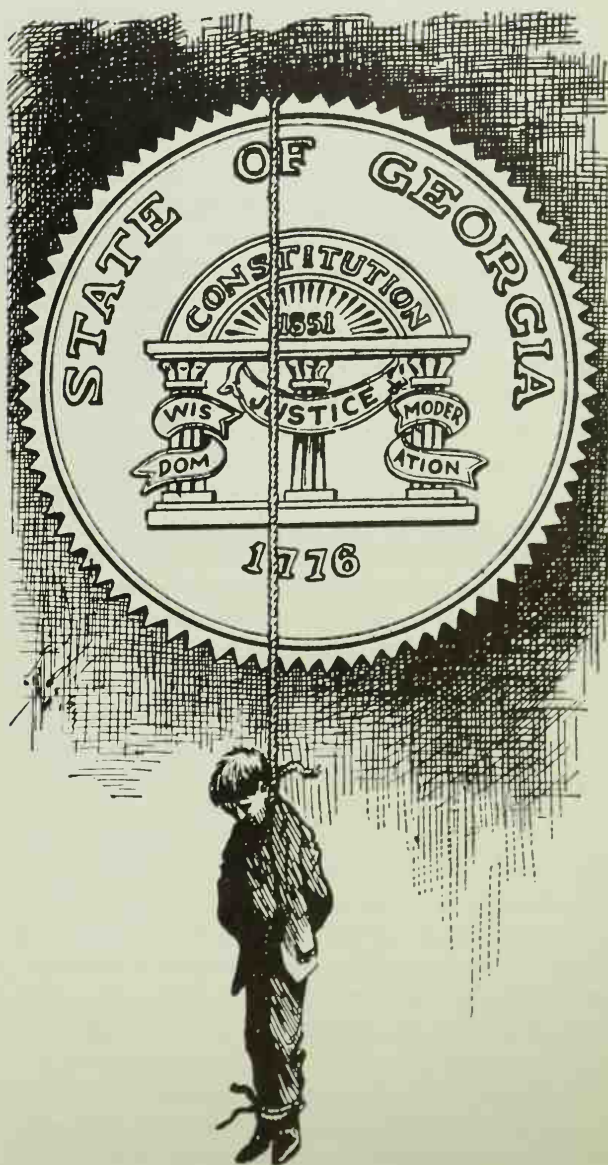
charged with the offense.<sup>7</sup> According to the Atlanta police, the main piece of evidence against the accused was the testimony of Jim Conley, a black ex-convict who worked as a janitor at the factory and who claimed to have helped Frank carry the body to the cellar of the building. When the trial opened in early August, 1913, the prosecuting attorney successfully based much of his argument on Conley's statement; within three weeks, twenty-nine-year-old Leo Frank was convicted and sentenced to be hanged.<sup>8</sup>

Many people, then and later, were of the opinion that Conley not only lied at the trial but that he himself was probably the murderer. Why did the prosecution fail to press the case against Conley? The pastor of the Baptist church attended by Mary Phagan's family probably explained it best when he pointed out that "this one old Negro would be poor atonement for the life of this innocent girl." When "the police arrested a Jew, and a Yankee Jew at that," he continued, "all of the inborn prejudice against Jews rose up in a feeling of satisfaction that here would be a victim worthy to pay for the crime."<sup>9</sup> Thus Frank was made the scapegoat for tensions prevalent in Georgia at the time—a situation scholar John Higham has described in the following terms:

A rising crime rate and anxiety over law and order, an increasing rigidity and punitiveness in racial discipline, an embattled defense of sexual purity, a baffled rage at industrial oppression—these were some of the emotions that swirled around the courtroom in Atlanta. Above all, Leo Frank was hated as an outsider, who focused the multiple fears the new prejudice brought together. Frank was not a southerner. He was a northern Jew. . . . In the most fundamental sense he was seen as a deviant . . . who incarnated all the alien forces that threatened the traditional culture.<sup>10</sup>

Whatever the circumstances surrounding Frank's conviction, the case at first attracted little attention outside of the South.<sup>11</sup> In the state of California, for instance, the Hearst papers were the only ones in August, 1913,

## *A Dishonored Seal.*



*From the Los Angeles Times, August 18, 1915*



even to mention the trial.<sup>12</sup> It was only after the verdict was in and the sentence handed down that news slowly spread about the judicial inequities in the proceedings against Frank. In the first place, it was apparent that the hearsay presented at the trial to suggest prior acts of sexual misconduct by the defendant had prejudiced his case in the minds of the jurors and should have been ruled inadmissible. Secondly, it was also obvious that the popular sentiment in Atlanta against Frank, who was frequently referred to as the “dannn Jew,” had influenced some members of the jury. After the trial several jurors disclosed that their lives would have been endangered if they had not rendered a guilty verdict. Thirdly, the judge himself expressed doubts about Frank’s guilt, certain grounds for a new trial.<sup>13</sup>

Convinced that Frank was the victim of “bloodthirsty” anti-Semitism, influential and wealthy northern Jews, working through the American Jewish Congress (which had been established in 1906 to aid Jews who were denied civil or religious rights), led and financed a legal battle for a new hearing. Throughout the remainder of 1913 and all through 1914, their efforts proved to no avail; twice the Georgia supreme court turned down motions for a new trial.<sup>14</sup>

Frank’s final hope for judicial action rested with the United States Supreme Court. Reluctant at first to consider the case, the nation’s highest tribunal eventually acquiesced when Frank’s attorney introduced a new legal argument based on the fact that Frank was denied due process of law because he was not present in the courtroom at the time the verdict was read. Frank had been forced to absent himself, the lawyer emphasized, because of the hostility of the spectators at the trial. After several months of deliberation, the Supreme Court on April 19, 1915, rejected the defense motion by a vote of

seven to two. In short, the majority ruled that the irregularities in Frank’s trial were minor in nature, that the Georgia courts accorded him the fullest opportunity to be heard, and that he was deprived of no right guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. The two dissenting justices, Oliver Wendell Holmes and Charles Evans Hughes, vigorously disagreed with the ruling. It was evident, they maintained, that the “jury responded to the passions of the mob” and that Leo Frank therefore had not been granted a fair trial.<sup>15</sup>

Popular opinion in the northern states overwhelmingly sustained the views of the dissenting justices.<sup>16</sup> In California, despite bitter political divisions on numerous other issues, there seemed to be a consensus of opinion on this particular one. “This man may be guilty or he may be innocent,” editorialized the conservative *San Francisco Chronicle*, “but the impression we get . . . is that he certainly did not have a fair trial, and that if hung, it will be as much without due process of law as if he had been hung directly by the mob. . . .”<sup>17</sup> Other conservative newspapers and spokesmen throughout the state expressed similar opinions. The *San Leandro Reporter* insisted that the Supreme Court “dodged the essential issue—that of the fairness of his trial,” while the *Oakland Tribune* noted that “feeling among the excitable and lower elements in Atlanta ran high at the time of the trial and undoubtedly there was an effort to terrorize the jury.”<sup>18</sup> Some California conservatives went even further, suggesting that not only was the jury influenced by outside agitators, but that the state’s leading witness, Jim Conley, who had “a notorious reputation for lying,” had perjured himself. Mayor Henry Rose of Los Angeles, for example, publicly maintained (in a racist but revealing remark) that he “would not hang a yellow cur on the evidence of that Negro.”<sup>19</sup>

Most California progressives also condemned the court’s decision and championed Frank’s cause—with one noticeable exception. The vast majority of progressives agreed with C. K. McClatchy, editor of the *Sacramento*

*Bee*, who argued that the nation's highest tribunal should have exerted its power so that justice might have been done.<sup>20</sup> The *Fresno Morning Republican*, however, flatly disagreed. Considered one of the leading progressive organs in the state, it was published by Chester H. Rowell, a member of the Progressive National Committee and a close adviser to Governor Hiram Johnson. Given these impeccable reform credentials, it was all the more surprising therefore when the *Republican* came out with an editorial approving the Supreme Court's actions on the grounds that a state was responsible for the conduct of criminal trials and that because the supreme court of Georgia had decided that due process of law was not violated, the United States Supreme Court exercised both restraint and wisdom in upholding that ruling. After discussing the judicial aspects of the case, the *Republican* went on to warn its readers not to be deceived by the flurry of publications which had appeared in defense of Frank, for they were designed to arouse "interest in the condemned man as the 'under-dog.' It has been the old trick of putting the prosecution on trial in an attempt to obscure the issue as against the accused murderer."<sup>21</sup>

The Fresno paper's editorial, to say the least, angered many progressives, including Meyer Lissner of Los Angeles. Lissner, a successful businessman and lawyer and one of the early founders of the progressive movement in California, was serving with Rowell on the Progressive National Committee as well as editing the *California Outlook*, the state's "official" reform journal.<sup>22</sup> As a Jew, moreover, Lissner took a special interest in the Frank case. In a letter to Rowell, he expressed considerable disappointment over the editorial. "It seems to me," Lissner wrote, "that if there ever was a case of a man being convicted of a crime which he was absolutely innocent and in which the circumstantial evidence pointed most clearly in another direction, this is the one. In my opinion it would be a blot on the escutcheon of this nation to kill this man."<sup>23</sup> As things turned out,

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however, Rowell had neither written nor authorized the editorial. As he explained to Lissner: "It happens that the editorial on the Frank case was one of the few editorials which I did not write myself, and knew nothing about." Furthermore, Rowell assured his political colleague, "If I had been doing it, I should not have taken that position."<sup>24</sup>

Rowell's explanation proved satisfactory to Lissner. It also suggested that whoever wrote the controversial editorial for the *Republican* was expressing an isolated opinion which had little support within progressive ranks.<sup>25</sup>

Progressive unity was also apparent in another issue raised by the case. Progressives argued that if the state of Georgia had had legislation protecting and safeguarding the rights of children (especially young girls) engaged in factory work, the crime itself could have been prevented. California progressives, in fact, were quick to point to their own accomplishments in this area. Under their leadership, the state legislature of 1911 had adopted an eight-hour day for women and measures which imposed restrictions on child labor, while successive legislatures had enacted laws establishing a minimum wage for women and children and a higher age limit at which children might first be employed.<sup>26</sup> Armed with these impressive achievements California progressives attacked the state of Georgia with a vengeance. Anna M. Reed, poet, editor, and long-time advocate of reform, declared that Georgia provided a "poor basis for civilization" since "forty-five percent of the children between the ages of 10 and 13 are ground to a living death daily in the

mills of labor.” Believing that Frank was innocent of the crime he was accused, Reed went on to urge that the real criminals were those who supported the state laws of Georgia which permitted “the exploitation of the child population for the benefit of her economic rulers.”<sup>27</sup> Another outspoken California progressive, Fremont Older, the nationally known editor of the *San Francisco Bulletin*, added his voice to those who held Georgia’s lawmakers responsible for the crime. “Far better, by proper education, by proper inspection of factories and factory conditions, to have forestalled and prevented the crime. . . . But Georgia chivalry did not consider it,” Older sarcastically concluded.<sup>28</sup>

Older’s views on child labor legislation were probably as repugnant to California conservatives as they were to “Georgia chivalry.” In arguments supporting Frank, conservatives, who were more closely linked to the business community than their political rivals, remained predictably silent on the issue of child labor.<sup>29</sup> Nor did they assume a very vocal stand on another problem raised by the case—capital punishment. For that matter, most progressives were equally as reluctant to confront this volatile issue; indeed the few who did were seen by their fellow progressives as radicals bent on disrupting rather than enriching the party. The very head of the reform movement in California, Governor Hiram Johnson, failed to understand why men like Fremont Older, who advocated repeal of the death penalty,<sup>30</sup> could not be satisfied with “sane legislation, such as Child Labor Laws, Eight Hour Day for Women, Workmen’s Compensation, and the like.” Instead, Johnson complained, Older wanted “to abolish all Prisons, free all convicts, and incarcerate society alone”—in short, “wreck the whole Progressive cause by going to extremes. . . .”<sup>31</sup>

Although it seems unlikely that these were Older’s objectives, the issue of capital punishment had become very volatile during the Progressive Era. Beginning in 1907 and spurred on by the reform impulse, seven states had abolished the death penalty, including California’s

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neighbors to the north, Oregon and Washington. To the south, the state of Arizona was on the brink of doing likewise as Leo Frank awaited his fate.<sup>32</sup> It was no coincidence, therefore, that a bill to rid California of capital punishment was introduced into the legislature in early January, 1915. Although it failed passage in the assembly by three votes, what is most significant is that neither progressives nor conservatives as groups strongly favored or opposed the measure. Within both camps there was almost equal division between positive and negative votes, indicating that the balloting was based on personal rather than partisan opinions.<sup>33</sup>

The legislative history of the measure, however, does not reveal the extent of the antagonism which most Californians—progressives and conservatives alike—felt toward abolishing capital punishment. Two of the most powerful progressive editors in the state, E. T. Earl of the *Los Angeles Express* and C. K. McClatchy of the *Sacramento Bee*, for example, were just as vehement in their attack on people urging repeal of the death penalty as were such leading conservative editors as Harrison Gray Otis of the *Los Angeles Times* and John P. Young of the *San Francisco Chronicle*.<sup>34</sup> In fact, leaders who favored the abolishment of capital punishment took special pains to separate the issue from the Frank case, fearing that the two might become so inextricably intertwined that popular opinion could turn against Frank.<sup>35</sup> This concern was not without foundation, as evidenced by an editorial in the progressive *Marysville Appeal* which warned its readers that “sob sisters and fanatics who are



opposed to punishment for crime stop short of nothing in order to create a prejudice in the mind of the public in favor of the accused, and this may apply in the Frank case. . . ."<sup>36</sup>

That a reform-minded paper expressed these thoughts about capital punishment was somewhat surprising in light of the apparent violations of Frank's constitutional rights during his trial. Equally as puzzling was the reaction of progressives to another glaring issue raised by the trial—anti-Semitism or, as it was referred to by contemporaries, "race prejudice." Here, again, progressives failed to face the problem head-on. For example, Irving Martin, editor of the influential *Stockton Record* and one of Hiram Johnson's strongest supporters, firmly denied that

race prejudice was responsible for the conviction of Leo Frank. The charge is contradicted by obvious facts. If there is any 'race prejudice' in Georgia, it is against the 'black' race; and a member of that race was a material witness before the 'white' jury that convicted Frank. That fact alone would, under ordinary circumstances, have operated in favor of the accused white man. Doubtless the charge of 'race prejudice' [or] sectarian prejudice . . . is a false charge. Judah P. Benjamin [a Jew] was a member of Jefferson Davis' cabinet. No section is more than the South free of bigotry.<sup>37</sup>

Whether or not Martin's editorial reflected progressive opinion in general is difficult to ascertain, since few progressives (and even fewer conservatives) in California took a public stand on this highly sensitive and potentially explosive problem. Nevertheless, there were those who contradicted the views presented by Martin. Former Governor George C. Pardee, a vigorous exponent of reform, condemned Georgia's "hellish frenzy for Semitic blood evinced in this mockery. . . ." Frank's conviction, insisted Pardee, "was due simply to racial hatred of him because of his being a Jew."<sup>38</sup> Alfred Holman of the *Oakland Tribune*—one of the most powerful conservative spokesmen in the state—not only agreed with the ex-governor but attempted to explain the

origins of this anti-Semitic sentiment. "In Georgia, as in many parts of the South," Holman maintained,

business and industrial methods are 'slack.' The go-slow, go-easy habit is fixed in the character of many of the people and is reflected in their ways of life and business. In recent years there has come into Georgia a very considerable number of Jews, trained to business thoroughness, industrious and frugal. They have made themselves felt in industry and in business, and, naturally, have brought about a condition extremely uncomfortable as it related to chronic indifference and indolence. Jealousy and religious prejudice thus are in alliance throughout a considerable part of the South, notably in Georgia. Upon Leo Frank, as a Jew, there has fallen the weight of this unworthy sentiment. . . .<sup>39</sup>

Revealing as these views may be, the lack of supportive evidence prevents any firm conclusions about the stand of progressives or conservatives as groups on the issue of anti-Semitism. Evidently progressives were divided on the matter, and conservatives were reticent to comment, with the exception of Holman whose statement suggests that conservatives saw the problem from an economic perspective.

**A**lthough neither California's progressives nor conservatives were willing to identify themselves politically as firm opponents of anti-Semitism, there is absolutely no doubt where the state's Jewish community stood. Outraged by what had occurred in Atlanta, they were of like mind in believing that Frank was a victim of blatant anti-Jewish sentiment and that only a massive popular campaign might reverse the judgment against him. In fact, as early as December, 1914, a number of California rabbis were espousing Frank's cause in their sermons and were "directing the work of getting up petitions in the prisoner's behalf."<sup>40</sup> Yet these and similar efforts have gone unnoticed by historians investigating Frank's case, who have focused on activities in the East and Midwest

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*More newspapers and journals served [California Jewry] than any other ethnic community of comparable numbers in the country.*

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where Jews lived in much greater numbers—but may not have wielded any greater influence.

By the early twentieth century, California's Jewry had become an influential force in the Golden State. But unlike Jews in other parts of the Union, their prominence in California affairs had little to do with an increase in their numbers at the turn of the century. Of the millions of Eastern European Jews who arrived in the United States at this time, only a handful traveled west; most settled in eastern and to a lesser degree midwestern cities. Thus California's Jewish population experienced no spectacular increase during the Progressive Era. In 1915, out of a total state population of approximately 3,000,000, there were only about 60,000 Jews in California, or 2 percent of the population. Roughly half of California's Jews, moreover, were located in one city, San Francisco, while the second greatest number, about 16,000, lived in Los Angeles. Oakland contained the third largest concentration of some 5,000, and Stockton ranked fourth with a little more than 1,000 Jewish residents.<sup>41</sup>

Perhaps what was most striking about the California Jewish community—aside from its achievements in both public and private life<sup>42</sup>—was the overall acceptance it experienced among non-Jews in the state. In the decade before the First World War, a time of a “noticeable upsurge” in social and economic anti-Semitism in the United States,<sup>43</sup> that sentiment was relatively absent in California. This can be explained by a unique set of historical circumstances. To begin with, Jews helped to shape the basic institutions of the state. In San Francisco, for example, a number of pioneer Jewish families con-

tributed significantly to the growth of the city and thereby established “a local respect that was not easily upset, particularly if they filled a vital need in the community.”<sup>44</sup> Secondly, California and especially San Francisco were not confronted by a sudden intrusion of large numbers of Jews after the turn of the century; instead the Jewish population increased by normal accretion, allowing assimilation to proceed without disruption.<sup>45</sup> Thirdly, although California Jews, like Jews in the South, found themselves in a society anxious to uphold white supremacy, in California strong anti-Chinese sentiment tended to bind white men together and minimize public displays of anti-Semitism.<sup>46</sup> Finally, the California Jewish community, largely of German descent and practitioners of reform Judaism,<sup>47</sup> were far more acceptable in the eyes of Gentile America than the more traditional and religiously conservative and orthodox Eastern European Jews.

Nevertheless, although California Jews had escaped the most blatant forms of anti-Semitism common in other parts of the United States, their position in the early twentieth century was far from secure. With the influx of hundreds of thousands of Jews, albeit far from the West Coast, it was almost inevitable that a new wave of anti-Jewish feeling would emerge. During the Los Angeles mayoralty campaign of 1909, for instance, it was no coincidence that Meyer Lissner was singled out by the *Times* and characterized as a “dirty, ill-kept pawnbroker rubbing his hands in greed and muttering ‘chent by chent.’”<sup>48</sup> Nor was it surprising that in 1914 a leaflet was circulated in the city of San Francisco calling upon “Mr. White American” to organize and protect his race against Negroes and Jews.<sup>49</sup> Although these were but isolated expressions of anti-Jewish feeling, they help to explain why Gentile Californians were so politically reluctant to confront and condemn the anti-Semitic overtones apparent in the Leo Frank case.

California's Jewish leaders, on the other hand, were determined to expose the religious bigotry which had

infected Frank's trial. Basing their campaign on humanitarian grounds, they studiously avoided discussing any related issues which might prove politically divisive within the Jewish community. Like Jews throughout the northern states, California's Jews were not attached to one political camp, though a majority identified more closely with the Republican party for its "idealism" of Abraham Lincoln and its greater readiness "to relieve the misery of persecuted Jews in Eastern Europe."<sup>50</sup> This affinity combined with a traditional concern for liberal objectives, resulting in more Jews supporting Hiram Johnson and the progressive movement than the conservative cause.<sup>51</sup> In fact some scholars have argued that the Jews of California were the most extreme progressives, because several of their number were prominent in drafting and implementing reform legislation in the state and many of their religious leaders served in the vanguard of the anti-capital punishment movement.<sup>52</sup> It was therefore natural that they would emerge as a powerful force in the struggle to seek justice for Leo Frank.

California Jews were well equipped to publicize Frank's cause, for more newspapers and journals served them at that time than any other ethnic community of comparable numbers in the country. In 1910 there had been only four Jewish weeklies available in the state, but in the next half-decade, reflecting a heightened concern over the rise of anti-Semitism and related issues both in the United States and abroad, seven additional publications appeared.<sup>53</sup> In short, California Jews had both the means and influence to make their views felt concerning the Frank case—and they did not shrink from the task.

Convinced that Frank was made the scapegoat for "blind passion, race hatred and an inflamed, unreasoning public opinion,"<sup>54</sup> Jewish leaders demanded that appropriate action be taken to save Frank. Nowhere in the state was this demand more fervently met than in San Francisco, where many people believed that there were unmistakable similarities between Frank's trial and the

recent local case of Abe Ruef. A San Francisco political boss in the early years of the century, Ruef, along with a number of other municipal officials, had been tried on corruption charges, but only his conviction had been upheld, and he alone had been sent to prison.<sup>55</sup> Inevitably many Jews concluded that Ruef had been singled out because of anti-Semitism and that the atmosphere at his trial "was identical with that surrounding the Frank case in Atlanta."<sup>56</sup> Although this analogy was incorrect (modern historians have found little anti-Semitism in the judicial proceedings involving Ruef),<sup>57</sup> the fact that Frank's prosecuting attorney emphasized the activities of such "Jewish criminals as Abe Ruef" no doubt gave further credence to those who drew parallels between the cases.<sup>58</sup> As a result, most California Jews probably agreed with the editor of the Los Angeles *B'nai B'rith Messenger* who, mincing few words, declared that "the Frank case [had] degenerated somewhat into a Jewish question."<sup>59</sup> Offering the only possible solution to this dilemma, the *San Francisco Emanu-El*, the state's most prominent Anglo-Jewish weekly, argued that if "race hatred and vengeance" was not to supersede the "dispassionate analysis of law and fact," then the governor of Georgia must act, "if not to restore Frank to liberty, to at least commute his sentence to life imprisonment."<sup>60</sup>

Commutation of Frank's sentence became the prime objective sought by most Jews active in the case. This would provide the necessary time, as Rabbi Michael Fried of Sacramento commented, to find the truth so that the real "murderer will be apprehended, and Frank's innocence will be established."<sup>61</sup> Consequently, a campaign was launched by California Jewry both to inform the public of the inequities in Frank's trial and to pressure Georgia Governor John M. Slaton to commute the sentence. Meyer Lissner, for one, allowed the editorial



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*Political leaders in California . . . supported the call for executive clemency [because] Frank's execution would have an obvious derogatory effect upon the American judicial system.*

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columns of his *California Outlook* to be used to rouse sentiment in favor of Frank's cause.<sup>62</sup> Having spoken with the famous detective, William J. Burns, who had investigated the case for the defense, Lissner was certain that there was no question of the innocence of Frank and no doubt of the guilt of Conley, the janitor.<sup>63</sup> Other Los Angeles Jews held the same opinion and contributed their efforts to the struggle.<sup>64</sup> In Northern California the movement was even more intense. San Francisco's most influential rabbis, Martin Meyer of Temple Emanu-El and Jacob Nieto of Temple Sherith Israel, delivered sermons, circulated petitions, and wrote letters for the commutation of Frank's sentence.<sup>65</sup> The outspoken Rabbi Meyer was so caught up in the struggle that he embarked upon a lecture tour across the East "in the hope of arousing increased sympathy for the young Jew."<sup>66</sup>

By late spring of 1915 their efforts were beginning to bear fruit. For one thing, many non-Jews throughout the nation began recognizing the "immense volume of doubt" surrounding Frank's guilt and became involved in the movement. "Organizations here, regardless of sect or religion," noted a reporter for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "are preparing to send appeals to Governor Slaton to at least commute the sentence of the condemned man until the flight of time may unravel the tangled skein of evidence."<sup>67</sup> Appeals by non-Jews, though, generally avoided the controversial issue of anti-Semitism and concentrated on the legal implications

raised by the trial. For example, San Francisco Supervisor Alexander T. Vogelsang wrote to the Georgia governor that the execution of Frank "would have a tendency to bring with it a profound disrespect of the law among millions of people, who now hold it in veneration."<sup>68</sup> Vogelsang's colleagues on the board of supervisors took a similar tack when they unanimously adopted resolutions favoring a reprieve.<sup>69</sup> In fact most political leaders and spokesmen in California, conservative and progressive, vigorously supported the call for executive clemency. Evidence indicates that their arguments were basically the same; namely, that Frank's execution would have an obvious derogatory effect upon the American judicial system.<sup>70</sup>

As the day for Frank's execution drew near, Californians awaited the Georgia governor's word "with bated breath, hoping that his decision will be in accord with justice and nothing more."<sup>71</sup> They were not to be disappointed—at least for the moment. On June 21, 1915, the day before Frank's scheduled death, Governor Slaton publicly expressed doubt about the young man's guilt and commuted his sentence to life imprisonment.<sup>72</sup>

"Throughout the nation," historian Leonard Dinnerstein has written, "the press and the public responded jubilantly to the commutation."<sup>73</sup> Californians of diverse political and religious backgrounds generally agreed that Slaton's decision was judicially sound and morally courageous.<sup>74</sup> Of course, the state's Jews were especially pleased with the governor's action.<sup>75</sup> In an interview with the *San Francisco Examiner*, Lucius L. Solomons, a well-known attorney in the city and vice-president of the national organization of the B'nai B'rith, best encapsulated Jewish sentiment when he declared that the commutation order was not only a triumph for Leo Frank but a "great victory for the Jewish people."<sup>76</sup>

In some quarters Slaton's announcement was also viewed as a sign of "new hope" in the struggle to abolish the death penalty.<sup>77</sup> Irving Martin of the *Stockton Record*, no friend of the movement, conceded that the sparing

of Frank's life suggested that capital punishment was nothing more than "class law" applied only to those who had neither resources nor friends to plead their case before the public and create the necessary doubt as to their guilt. After all, noted Martin "doubtless a thousand men have been hanged on evidence no stronger than that adduced against Leo Frank. When it becomes apparent that only unfortunates are selected as vicarious sacrifices for the principle of blood atonement," the editor prophesied, "the law of capital punishment will fall into general disrepute."<sup>78</sup>

While Martin's views warranted further consideration, few Californians took note of them. A general distaste for the topic combined with elation over the governor's action probably discouraged any serious discussion of the commutation's relationship to the issue of the death penalty. The consensus of opinion seemed to be that the decision made by Slaton was a just one, that it would now allow time for the truth to surface, and that Frank's innocence would ultimately be established.<sup>79</sup> As events unfolded, however, this was not the case. On August 16, less than two months after Frank's death sentence had been commuted, a band of twenty-five men snatched him from his jail in Milledgeville, Georgia, drove all night to the outskirts of Marietta (the hometown of Mary Phagan, the murdered girl), and lynched him.<sup>80</sup>

"Language is impotent to fitly characterize the act of the twenty-five murderers," charged Harrison Gray Otis of the *Los Angeles Times*.<sup>81</sup> Meyer Lissner, long an opponent of Otis, found himself in full accord with the conservative editor. Writing in the *California Outlook*, Lissner severely condemned the hanging. "It is the savagery of the dark ages, with its blending of superstition, of religious frenzy, of racial prejudice, of blood lust and ingenious cruelty, that alone can bring forth such fruit."<sup>82</sup> In other parts of the state reactions were similar. The lynching of Leo Frank, the conservative *Santa Rosa Republican* insisted, "was one of the most cowardly, most uncivilized crimes this nation will ever be called

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*An investigation was ordered, but, given the support . . . for the lynchers, it proved fruitless. The conspirators (several of whom offered interviews to reporters) escaped judicial prosecution.*

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upon to explain."<sup>83</sup> Fremont Older of the *San Francisco Bulletin* stated with even stronger language: "Georgia is mad with her own virtue. She is not civilized, she is not Christian, she is not sane."<sup>84</sup> Across the bay in Oakland, the *Tribune* hypothesized that even if evidence came to light to prove Frank guilty, it would not wipe out the stain on Georgia."<sup>85</sup>

California Jews, shocked and dismayed, expressed themselves in the same unforgiving terms. After noting with irony that Georgia had been founded as a "refuge for the oppressed," San Francisco Rabbi Bernard M. Kaplan concluded that this "terrible crime" against Frank would "leave an everlasting stigma on the state."<sup>86</sup> Others believed that drastic punishment was in order. The *Los Angeles B'nai B'rith Messenger* went as far as to suggest that all Jews leave Georgia and "good non-Jews do likewise, and thus let it be left to murderers and assassins. Georgia ought to be fenced off until it has expiated its guilt."<sup>87</sup>

To the great disappointment of law-abiding citizens throughout the nation, Georgia did nothing to atone for its guilt. An investigation was ordered, but, given the popular support in the state for the lynchers, it proved fruitless. All of the conspirators (several of whom offered interviews to reporters) escaped judicial prosecution.<sup>88</sup> Perhaps Meyer Lissner came closest to the truth when he wrote that Leo Frank's fate "was decreed. The police, determined to admit no mistake on their part, doomed him; the mob, incited by a yellow press and by shameless demagogues, howled for his life; and the

chivalry of Georgia bowed to the mob's frenzy and registered its verdict. From his arrest to the last fell act, he had no chance of escape."<sup>89</sup>

Few would deny that Californians had struggled valiantly to save the young man, although citizens in other states, of course, also launched campaigns in Frank's behalf.<sup>90</sup> The western state's strong reform impulse, combined with the influence exerted by its active and prosperous Jewish community, resulted in catapulting the state into the vanguard seeking justice for Frank.

Equally important is the fact that Californians, by focusing on the Frank case, revealed much about themselves. First and foremost, they showed that whatever their political affiliations, they were of like mind about violations of fundamental civil rights, at least the rights of white men. Conservatives were no less outspoken in their advocacy of Frank's cause than were their more liberal political rivals, the progressives. True, conservatives tended to view the Frank case in purely legal terms, while progressives, in addition to condemning the judicial inequities of the trial, also emphasized aspects of social injustice such as child labor and the treatment of women which directly related to the affair. On the other hand, aside from a few extreme progressives, neither political group was willing to focus on the explosive issues of capital punishment and anti-Semitism—matters which the Atlanta trial inevitably brought to the surface. California progressives might have been genuinely concerned about these social issues, but in light of their reluctance to confront them, the George Mowry-Richard Hofstadter thesis of the "mild, middle-class" nature of progressive reform still seems valid.<sup>91</sup>

## Notes

1. For the historiography of progressivism, see Robert H. Wiebe, "The Progressive Years, 1900-1917," in William H. Cartwright and Richard L. Watson, Jr., eds., *The Reinterpretation of American History and Culture* (Washington, D.C., 1973), pp. 425-442; and Arthur Mann, "The Progressive Tradition," in John Higham, ed., *The Reconstruction of American History* (New York, 1962), pp. 157-179.
2. Leonard Dinnerstein, *The Leo Frank Case* (New York, 1968).
3. Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggle for Japanese Exclusion* (New York, 1973), p. 131, n. 15.
4. Spencer C. Olin, Jr., *California's Prodigal Sons: Hiram Johnson and the Progressives, 1911-1917* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1968), pp. 169-184.
5. George E. Mowry, *The California Progressives* (Berkeley, 1951), p. 221; Olin, *California's Prodigal Sons*, 103. For an analysis of the decline of progressivism in 1913-1914, see Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era* (New York, 1954), 75.
6. A California progressive is defined herein as one who generally supported the reform movement, whether he or she was Progressive Republican or Wilsonian Democrat in orientation. A California conservative, on the other hand, is defined as one who favored William H. Taft in the presidential election of 1912 and opposed reform efforts.
7. Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank Case*, 1-35.
8. *Ibid.*, 36-61.
9. *Ibid.*, 33.
10. John Higham, *Send These To Me: Jews and Other Immigrants in Urban America* (New York, 1975), p. 186; see also Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank Case*, 62-76.
11. Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank Case*, 62.
12. See, for example, *San Francisco Examiner*, August 26, 1913; *Los Angeles Examiner*, August 26, 1913.
13. Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank Case*, 74, 82-83.
14. *Ibid.*, 62, 83-84, 99, 107-109.
15. *Ibid.*, 109-113.
16. *Ibid.*, 113.
17. *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 21, 1915.
18. *San Leandro Reporter*, June 26, 1915; *Oakland Tribune*, June 23, 1915.
19. *Los Angeles Examiner*, June 22, 1915; Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank Case*, 51.
20. *Sacramento Bee*, April 22, 1915. See also *Bakersfield Californian*, April 22, 1915; *Oakland Enquirer*, April 20, 1915.
21. *Fresno Morning Republican*, April 20, 1915.
22. Mowry, *California Progressives*, 43, 326.
23. Meyer Lissner to Chester H. Rowell, April 23, 1915, Chester H. Rowell Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.



24. Chester H. Rowell to Meyer Lissner, May 1, 1915, Rowell Papers.
25. The *Marysville Appeal* reprinted the *Fresno Republican* editorial on April 22, 1915, and was the only other progressive paper supporting this anti-Frank position.
26. Franklin Hichborn, *Story of the Session of the California Legislature of 1915* (San Francisco, 1916), pp. 174-178, 189; Olin, *California's Prodigal Sons*, 48-49. See also *Stockton Record*, June 19, 1915; *San Francisco Call and Post*, August 18, 1915.
27. *Petaluma Northern Crown*, August 1915.
28. *San Francisco Bulletin*, August 19, 1915.
29. One of the few exceptions was the *San Jose Mercury Herald*, a staunchly conservative paper, which called for national legislation to regulate child labor, but made no mention of the Frank case. See *San Jose Mercury Herald*, June 18, 1915.
30. For Older's views on capital punishment, see Robert W. Davenport, "Fremont Older in San Francisco Journalism: A Partial Biography, 1856-1917" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1969), pp. 323-324 and Evelyn Wells, *Fremont Older* (New York, 1936), pp. 241-243.
31. Hiram Johnson to Theodore Roosevelt, August 19, 1914, Hiram Johnson Papers, Bancroft Library. Although Johnson rarely remained silent on leading issues of the day, he took no public stand on the Frank case. This may be explained by the fact that at the time the case was under discussion, there were twelve men in California prisons sentenced to death. The governor probably realized the impropriety of speaking out on the Frank trial when he himself was considering possible reprieves or commutations of death sentences within his own state. For background information on this problem, see E. T. Earl to Johnson, March 4, 1915; Johnson to Earl, March 9, 1915; Johnson to Fremont Older, September 20, 1914, March 9, 15, 24, 1915, Johnson Papers; *Stockton Record*, August 3, 1915; *San Diego Sun*, August 20, September 4, 1915; *Petaluma Northern Crown*, August 1915.
32. Arizona repealed capital punishment in 1916; Missouri followed a year later, bringing the total number of states which abolished the death penalty during the Progressive Era to nine. By 1935, however, all of them had restored capital punishment. William J. Bowers, *Executions in America* (Lexington, Mass., 1974), pp. 6-7.
33. *Journal of the Assembly During the Forty-First Session of the Legislature of the State of California, 1915* (Sacramento, 1915), pp. 108, 956, 1032, 1290, 1556, 1809-1811. See also *San Francisco Bulletin*, April 1, 1915.
34. For a sampling of the views of these editors, see E. T. Earl to Hiram Johnson, October 20, 1915, Johnson Papers; *Sacramento Bee*, August 17, 1915; *Los Angeles Times*, August 15, 1915; *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 23, 1915.
35. See, for example, Jacob Nieto, "[A] few words in regard to . . . a case tried in Atlanta, Georgia," n.d., Jacob Nieto Papers, Western Jewish History Center, Judah L. Magnes Museum, Berkeley.
36. *Marysville Appeal*, June 16, 1915.
37. *Stockton Record*, June 23, 1915.
38. *Oakland Enquirer*, April 20, August 18, 1915.
39. *Oakland Tribune*, June 25, 1915.
40. *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 3, 1915. See also *San Francisco Examiner*, December 27, 1914.
41. *American Jewish Yearbook, 1927-1928* (Philadelphia, 1928), pp. 241-246.
42. See Martin Meyer, *Western Jewry: An Account of the Achievements of the Jews and Judaism in California* (San Francisco, 1916), 9-15.
43. Cary McWilliams, *A Mask for Privilege: Anti-Semitism in America* (Boston, 1948), pp. 23-24; Eric F. Goldman, *Rendezvous With Destiny: A History of Modern American Reform* (New York, 1959), p. 143; John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New York, 1963), pp. 160-161; Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank Case*, 70.
44. Higham, *Send These To Me*, 111-113. See also Earl Raab, "'There's No City Like San Francisco': Profile of a Jewish Community," *Commentary*, 10 (October 1950): 370-371.
45. Higham, *Send These To Me*, 164-165; Raab, "No City Like San Francisco," 372.
46. Higham, *Send These To Me*, 164.
47. Norton B. Stern, *California Jewish History: A Descriptive Bibliography* (Glendale, Calif., 1967), p. 11.
48. *Los Angeles Times*, August 31, October 24, November 27, 1909.
49. Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 186.
50. Lawrence H. Fuchs, *The Political Behavior of American Jews* (Glencoe, Ill., 1956), pp. 44-45, 50-51. See also Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab, *The Politics of Unreason: Right-Wing Extremism in America, 1790-1970* (New York, 1970), p. 103.
51. For California Jews supporting progressivism, see, for example, Olin, *California's Prodigal Sons*, 181; Grace Larsen, "A Progressive in Agriculture: Harris Weinstock," *Agricultural History*, 32 (July 1958): 187-193; Grace Larsen and Henry E. Erdman, "Aaron Sapiro: Genius of Farm Co-operative Promotion," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 49 (September 1962), 243-247; Lawrence Arinstein, "Community Service in California Public Health and Social Welfare," 22-24, typescript of an oral interview conducted by Edna Tartaul Daniel (1964), Bancroft Library. For Jews favoring the conservative cause, see, for example, Otto Irving Wise to Hiram Johnson, March 14, 1917, Johnson Papers; Max Voorspan and Lloyd P. Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles* (Philadelphia, 1970), pp. 136-137.
52. For Jewish involvement in reform measures, see Olin, *California's Prodigal Sons*, 76-80, 105-107, 109-110, 181. For California

- rabbis active in the anti-capital punishment movement, see *San Francisco Emanu-El*, April 23, June 25, 1915; *San Francisco Bulletin*, April 1, 1915; Michael M. Zarchin, *Glimpses of Jewish Life in San Francisco* (Oakland, 1964), p. 132.
53. *American Jewish Yearbook, 1914-1915* (Philadelphia, 1914), pp. 328-334; *Ibid.*, 1915-1916 (Philadelphia, 1915), p. 341; Stern, *California Jewish History*, 157-159.
  54. *San Francisco Emanu-El*, June 25, 1915.
  55. Walton Bean, *Boss Ruef's San Francisco: The Story of the Union Labor Party, Big Business, and the Graft Prosecution* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967), pp. 268-286, 306-308.
  56. Stephen Wise to Hiram Johnson, August 11, 1914, Johnson Papers.
  57. Bean, *Boss Ruef's San Francisco*, 289.
  58. Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank Case*, 53.
  59. *Los Angeles B'nai B'rith Messenger*, June 25, 1915.
  60. *San Francisco Emanu-El*, June 4, 1915.
  61. *San Francisco Examiner*, June 22, 1915. See also *Los Angeles B'nai B'rith Messenger*, July 2, 1915.
  62. *California Outlook*, June 26, 1915.
  63. Meyer Lissner to Chester H. Rowell, April 23, 1915, Rowell Papers.
  64. See, for example, *Los Angeles B'nai B'rith Messenger*, June 25, 1915; *Los Angeles Examiner*, June 22, 1915.
  65. *San Francisco Examiner*, December 27, 1914, June 22, 1915; Jacob Nieto, "[A] few words in regard to . . . a case tried in Atlanta, Georgia," n.d.; Jacob Nieto to His Excellency, the Governor of Georgia [June 1915], Nieto Papers.
  66. *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 3, 1915.
  67. *Ibid.*, May 2, 1915.
  68. *Ibid.*
  69. *San Francisco Emanu-El*, May 7, 1915.
  70. See, for example, *Marysville Appeal*, June 12, 16, 1915; *Oakland Enquirer*, April 20, 1915; *Los Angeles B'nai B'rith Messenger*, June 25, 1915; *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 23, 1915.
  71. *Marysville Appeal*, June 16, 1915.
  72. Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank Case*, 122-129.
  73. *Ibid.*, 129.
  74. For progressive approval of the commutation, see *San Francisco Bulletin*, June 23, 1915; *Oakland Enquirer*, June 22, 1915; *Sacramento Bee*, June 24, 1915; *Bakersfield Californian*, June 21, 1915. For conservative praise of the action, see *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 23, 1915; *Oakland Tribune*, June 23, 1915. Also revealing are the surveys of public opinion taken by the Hearst papers; see *San Francisco Examiner*, June 22, 1915; *Los Angeles Examiner*, June 22, 1915.
  75. See, for example, *San Francisco Emanu-El*, June 25, 1915; *Los Angeles B'nai B'rith Messenger*, June 25, 1915.
  76. *San Francisco Examiner*, June 22, 1915.
  77. *San Francisco Emanu-El*, June 25, 1915.
  78. *Stockton Record*, June 21, 1915.
  79. *Los Angeles B'nai B'rith Messenger*, July 2, 1915; *Los Angeles Examiner*, June 22, 1915; *San Francisco Examiner*, June 22, 1915.
  80. Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank Case*, 139-140.
  81. *Los Angeles Times*, August 18, 22, 1915.
  82. *California Outlook*, September 1915.
  83. *Santa Rosa Republican*, August 18, 1915.
  84. *San Francisco Bulletin*, August 19, 1915.
  85. *Oakland Tribune*, August 17, 1915. For additional contemporary comment on the lynching, see *San Francisco Examiner*, August 18, 1915; *Oakland Enquirer*, August 17, 19, 1915; *Stockton Record*, August 17, 1915; *Sacramento Bee*, August 21, 1915; *Fresno Morning Republican*, August 18, 1915; *Marysville Appeal*, August 18, 1915; *Livermore Herald*, August 21, 1915; *Alameda Times Star*, August 18, 1915.
  86. *San Francisco Examiner*, August 18, 1915; see also *San Francisco Emanu-El*, August 20, 1915.
  87. *Los Angeles B'nai B'rith Messenger*, September 17, 1915. Former Governor George C. Pardee advanced a similar idea; see *Oakland Enquirer*, August 18, 1915.
  88. Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank Case*, 145.
  89. *California Outlook*, September 1915.
  90. For a sampling of public opinion concerning the Frank case, see Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank Case*, 74-75, 115-119, 129-130.
  91. Mowry, *California Progressives*, 86-104; Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York, 1955), pp. 131-173.

## Labor Pains: An Oral History of California's Women Farmworkers

### REVIEWS

Charles Wollenberg, *Reviews Editor*

*I am an agricultural working woman. I came to this camp with my husband and baby. I have to get up before the men get up. I feed my baby and then I am supposed to help in the kitchen. If I don't help in the kitchen, people will say, "What kind of woman is she?" Although there is a paid cook, I am supposed to help. I have to go out to work with the men at the same time, taking my baby with me. When we finish work at suppertime, I have to do the cooking and wash the dishes. At night when the baby cries, I have to be extremely careful because we live in a rooming house, and the partition has thin walls. Sometimes I have to take the baby outside in order to quiet it. I am suffering doubly.*

Japanese farmworker, Sacramento Delta, 1933

Agriculture is the largest industry in California. At least one out of every three jobs in the state is agriculturally related. Women comprise more than 40 percent of the agricultural labor force, yet agriculture is the only industry in California in which the conditions of its female work force have not been documented by the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor. The history of California's women farmworkers has remained unexplored.

Combining the methods of oral history with those of

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Margo McBane is an historian who has worked with the United Farm Workers for several years and has taught history and social studies in California high schools. In 1975 she authored *History of California Agriculture: Focus on Women Farmworkers* (San Francisco).

Mary Winegarden joined the project in the spring of 1978 to produce the radio and slide-tape shows.



*Farmworking women such as this Japanese mother photographed with her son in the early 1900s worked full shifts in the fields and cared for families as well.*

more traditional historical research, the California women farmworkers project is producing a one-hour radio program and a multi-media slide and tape show to illustrate the role and influence of women in California farm labor. The experiences of the many ethnic and age groups involved in farm labor history are being explored through tape-recorded interviews. Portions of these interviews are integrated into an historical narrative which is broadened by folk, topical, and instrumental music from each historical era.

Interviewees were contacted through labor unions, religious organizations, personal friends, newspaper solicitations, agricultural organizations, and other oral history projects. Translators were used when interviewees did not speak English. As with most oral history interviews, at least two sessions were needed to develop a comfortable rapport with each person. Interviews usually began with the chronology of a person's life followed by questions about the impressions, feelings, and descriptions of specific events which formed the major part of his or her working life. Because sexism was not a conscious issue in the lives of many of these people, interviewers found it important to press for their descriptions of specific experiences rather than their generalizations.

At least seventy interviews averaging two hours in length have been conducted. Most of the tapes and transcripts will be stored at The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley. Two interviews were cosponsored by the Oral History Project at the University of Michigan, and twelve interviews were sponsored by the Oral History Project at California State University, Fullerton. Major funding for the project has been provided through a grant from the California Council for the Humanities in Public Policy. The Council matches 85 percent of all other contributions to the project. More funds are needed to complete the work.

The primary focus of the women farmworkers project



is the historical effects of women in the fields and packing-sheds. Its central issues include sex discrimination in employment practices, the division of labor in the fields and packing-sheds, the role of women in labor organizing, the struggles for medical care and housing, childcare, and the effects of mechanization on employment. The issues are examined in the context of the eras of California's agricultural history as determined by the dominant ethnic and sex grouping of the workers: Chinese men, 1870-1900; Anglo male "bindlestiffs" or hoboos, 1880-1920; Japanese families, 1900-1924; the Women's Land Army, 1914-1919; Anglo families of "gasoline gypsies" or "Fruit Tramps," 1920-1930; Mexican families, 1920-1940s; Filipino men, 1920-1940s; Dust Bowl families, 1930-1940s; Bracero men, 1942-1964; and farmworker families of the recent years.

In the eras of California's farm labor history when women were prevented from immigrating to the United States (the Chinese, Filipino, and Bracero years), men suffered from inadequate working and living conditions.

A retired Yugoslavian woman farmworker and grower recalled that on one farm, "the Filipinos had a two-story barn for a house. They put their 'patties' on the floor, and forty or fifty would sleep in that place. They had a man or two that were cooks. I don't remember a Filipino woman until the time World War II started." Although the men appeared to be bachelors with transient status, many were sending money to families back home.

When women began working in the fields around the turn of the century, they suffered from restrictive cultural roles, job discrimination, and poor union representation. In addition to being field workers, the women also assumed the jobs of wife and mother. A retired labor camp manager in the 1940s remembered that "there were nearly always more men than women in the fields. Women were thinning, but a lot were chopping cotton, too. In many cases women did more work than the men because they'd do the work in the field all day and then do most of the work at home afterwards and in the mornings. A woman's work was every place; a man's work was just in the fields."

In the fields and packing-sheds, women were rarely hired and paid on an equal job level with men. One woman farmworker recalled, "There are certain jobs that only men did: driving tractors, for instance. I don't remember seeing a woman on a tractor in all the years I was there. Your melons and your tomatoes, plums, pears, peaches are wrapped in paper. That was done by the women in the packing house. I never did see a man doing it."

Although unions normally functioned as advocates for workers, they often did not offer farmworking women equal voice and respect. A woman who organized for the Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union and United Cannery, Allied Packing and Agricultural Workers Association unions during the 1930s reflected, "It was absolutely nonsense to expect your co-workers to have any understanding of the

problems you had being a mother, a wife, and an organizer. There was just a total lack of comprehension of what that problem was. You therefore had to be strong enough and determined enough . . . that you went ahead and carved it out."

Women farmworkers today are suffering many of the same difficulties as agricultural women of the past. They continue to carry the double workload of mother and worker, and most farm work is still divided unfairly along gender lines, especially in fields dominated by mechanization. *Campesina*, a preliminary report prepared in 1978 by the California Commission on the Status of Women, observes:

Women farmworkers are not a surplus labor force, since they earn most of their income from farmwork. They can be seen to work a significant part of the farm work and are often heads of households. In spite of the considerable role they play in the agricultural labor force, they face barriers to upward job mobility, fuller employment, and higher annual incomes. They are tax-paying citizens of the United States, yet they lack basic facilities such as adequate housing and health care, as well as services such as child care. . . . They are clear about the positive and negative aspects of agricultural work and seek improved working conditions and benefits only to the degree of comparability to other employment sectors.

The primary goal of the women farmworkers project is to fill the information gap in California's farm labor history. The project will record and document the life stories of an historically voiceless workforce: women farmworkers. The California Commission on the Status of Women has just completed its first survey of current needs of migrant women in Fresno and Imperial counties. Through the oral history project's examination of the historically repetitive problems confronting farmworker women, the commission's survey will gain a more solid foundation from which to make its recommendations for the future.

## Book Reviews

### *A Companion to California.*

By James D. Hart. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978. viii. 494 pages. \$22.50.)

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*Reviewed by W. Turrentine Jackson, Professor of California History at the University of California, Davis, and a Fellow of the California Historical Society.*

This is an exceptional book. At first glance the casual reader might mistake it for another place name book to augment the volumes by Gudde and the Renschers, but it is much more. True, place names are included. Every dominant geographic feature of California is noted and its significance recorded, including the rivers, valleys, and mountains. There are items on the climate, flora, and fauna. The overriding theme in this context is the uniqueness of the state's geographic features. Each county and major town also rate an entry.

The time span of this compendium is from the Sacred Expeditions (1769) to the present day. Within this historical framework, attention is given to missionaries, Spanish-Mexican rancheros, explorers, pioneer settlers, and developers of the natural resources. Attention to history is only a portion of the volume; emphasis is on the human factor. Individuals who have made a contribution, including politicians, bankers, educators, businessmen, artists, authors, benefactors, and socialites are included. Even notorious criminals are not neglected. Discussions of the careers of living athletes and athletic teams, of entertainers and the entertainment world, emphasize contemporary concerns.

Everything from A to Z is there, and this is an overwhelming feat. Entries under the letter A include major articles on aerospace, agricultural labor, agriculture, apparel industry, and architecture. Personalities reflect the changes in time and the tremendous diversity of interests of California: Ansel Adams, Kurt Adler, Frank Albert, José Alemany, Henry Alexander, Joseph Alioto, George Allen, Juan Bautista Alvarado, Juan Bautista de Anza, Francisco Arce, Luis Argüello, José Arrillaga, Gertrude Atherton, Faxon Dean Atherton, John Audubon, Mary Austin, Gene Autry, and Juan Ayala. What would California be without art, the academy awards, A.C.T. (American Conservatory Theater), the Angels and Athletics, Armenians, apricots, artichokes, avocados, and azaleas?

Reflecting current emphasis, the Indians, as well as other

racial, ethnic, and national groups characterizing California's heterogeneous population are generously recognized. The author's own background and professional interest has resulted in an emphasis and unusual comprehension of the cultural, literary, and social aspects of the state's development.

The title of the book has been felicitously selected. It should, and no doubt will, become a companion to many in, or interested in, California. Tourists and travelers will include the volume in their baggage, scholars and intelligent readers will place it alongside the dictionary in their studies for ready reference. Every native son and daughter will want it prominently displayed on the coffee table. Seldom is a volume published that will serve the diverse needs and interests of so many people. Moreover, few individuals in California have the breadth of vision and the depth of understanding to produce such a cornucopia of history, literature, legend, folklore, and general information. James D. Hart is such a man.

### *Reminiscences of People and Change in California Agriculture, 1900-1975:* J. Earl Coke.

Preface by Harry R. Wellman. Interviews conducted by Ann Foley Scheuring. Davis: University of California, 1976. 265 pp.

### *Henry Schacht and the Art of Agricultural Communication.*

Preface by Hamilton L. Hintz. Interviews conducted by Marvin Brien. Davis: University of California, 1977. 283 pp.

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*Reviewed by Paul W. Gates, emeritus Professor of History, Cornell University, who is currently writing on the long battle to modernize American public land policies, 1879-1976.*

The careers of J. Earl Coke and Henry Schacht have much in common. Both men were born in Southern California, studied at the University of California, were employed in professional work in agricultural extension and education at the University of California, Berkeley, and took positions in



corporations and banks. Both evidence a conservative point of view although not radically conservative such as the Associated Farmers who resorted to terrorism to defeat labor organizers.

Both men were remarkably successful in impressing their superiors with their abilities. They were pushed up rapidly and achieved outstanding success in their business and professional careers and, in the case of Coke, in a political career also. In what ways and to what degree they influenced agriculture in California is not clear, but that is the hardest question for anyone to answer about himself or others.

Coke at the age of twenty-two was appointed assistant farm adviser to consult with farmers concerning feed, seed selection, methods of harvesting and marketing. At 28 he was made an agronomy specialist, and his experience with farmers growing sugar beets led the Spreckels Sugar Beet Company to select him as their farm advisor. His demonstrated ability in public speaking and writing then caused him to be brought back to the Berkeley university as director of agricultural extension. In 1953 Ezra Taft Benson, newly appointed secretary of agriculture in the Eisenhower cabinet, brought Coke to Washington as assistant secretary of agriculture.

In 1955 Coke returned to California as director of extension but soon became a vice-president of the Bank of America with responsibility in the field of agriculture. The bank was heavily involved in making loans to farmers, particularly to large and corporate farmers, or "agri-businesses" as Coke liked to call them. After ten years with the bank he retired and was then asked by Governor Ronald Reagan to become director, later secretary of the state department of agriculture. In recounting the story of his successes and promotions Coke revealed his attitude toward contemporaries, associates, institutions, and lobbyists. His philosophical views emerge, too. The Farm Bureau was his favorite farm agency, the Grange too weak to really count, the NFO beneath contempt. Coke disliked the Soil Conservation Service and the crop adjustment program for their bureaucratic organization and their interference with the law of supply and demand. The AFL-CIO, the Food and Drug Administration, consumer groups, and "social do-gooders" were dangerous or at the least nuisances. The activities of Cesar Chavez and economist Paul Taylor were deplorable. (Incidentally, UC Berkeley's oral history program has a three-volume oral history of Paul S. Taylor which of course offers a very different perspective.) Coke's remarks

on Governor Reagan, Ezra Taft Benson, the short handle hoc, and the adoption of the California water plan in 1960 are most interesting. Someone was guilty of covering up the real facts about the water plan, but Coke claims the Bank of America could not have been responsible.

Henry Schacht's career advanced equally rapidly, though Schacht did not enter political service. His replies reflect his early interest in writing and speaking which led to his becoming at the age of 22 an information specialist at the university where he delivered radio talks on agricultural problems. In 1942 he was asked to join NBC as their specialist on agriculture. Schacht's long continued column in the *San Francisco Chronicle* seems to have been widely read. By 1961 he had returned to the university as director of agricultural information. In 1965, his services were in demand by both Wells Fargo Bank and the Cannery and Growers Coop, but he took the position of vice-president for corporate relations with the latter, "the largest grower-owned cooperative in the world." Cannery and Growers were threatened with heavy loss for a year's pack of cyclamated diet fruits and drinks, and Schacht lobbied hard but unsuccessfully in Washington to change the Food and Drug Administration's ruling. (The Cannery and Growers sold their pack abroad at a heavy loss.) Schacht's account of his innocence at the start of his lobbying career and the skill he developed in this activity is worthwhile reading. He later retired from corporate activity to join a growing army of agricultural consultants.

Coke and Schacht were outstanding figures in agricultural education. Persons interested in their careers and in their fields will find these oral histories useful.

*Herbert Eugene Bolton: The Historian and the Man.*

By John Francis Bannon. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1978. xx, 296 pp. Paper \$8.95, cloth \$15.00.)

*Reviewed by Charles Wollenberg, Reviews Editor of California History magazine.*

Forty years ago the University of California at Berkeley was a center for the study of the regional history of the Southwest. This was in large part due to the influence of Herbert Bolton, professor of history at Berkeley from 1911 to

*Herbert Eugene Bolton outside his office at the University of California, Berkeley.*

1945 and chairman of the department and director of the Bancroft Library for many of those years. During his long tenure, Bolton supervised more than 100 successful doctoral students, many of whom went on to distinguished teaching careers at colleges and universities throughout the nation. Now, a quarter of a century after Bolton's death, one of those former students, Father John Bannon of St. Louis University, has produced a welcome biography of his mentor.

Not surprisingly, Bannon presents a favorable view of Bolton as a tireless researcher and inspiring teacher whose only fault was an almost constitutional inability to meet publication deadlines. Unfortunately, we learn little about the personal motivations behind Bolton's workaholic ways, but the book does provide a complete account of his career and in the process tells us much about the developing academic historical profession during the early twentieth century.

Bannon argues against the existence of a well-articulated "Boltonian" historical thesis. Certainly it is true that the great bulk of Bolton's work was narrative rather than interpretative history, but Bolton did operate within an intellectual context that at least can be described as a "perspective" if not a "thesis." He viewed American history in hemispheric terms, encompassing both English America and Latin America, and propounded this concept in his famous course, History 8, the History of the Americas. Influenced by Frederick Jackson Turner, his teacher at the University of Wisconsin, Bolton saw the "borderlands" of the Southwest as a focal point of hemispheric history, the place where the English American and Spanish American frontiers met, overlapped, and came into conflict.

This broad perspective has been increasingly rejected by scholars since Bolton's death. American historians have attacked the Turnerian concept of frontier history, while Latin Americanists have concentrated on the complexities of individual national histories rather than the broad sweep of hemispheric themes. Today, few scholars would agree with Bannon that Bolton was "one of the greats," and many would accept John Higham's judgment that "Bolton lacked the analytical ability to make his concept fruitful. . . ."

Nowhere is the decline of the Boltonian perspective more evident than at the Berkeley university. History 8 is no longer taught, and the history department no longer contains specialists in the southwestern region. It may be a reflection of the rootlessness of the contemporary academic



community that, in terms of courses and research interests, the Berkeley department could easily be replicated at universities in Cambridge, New Haven, or Madison.

One does not have to accept the Boltonian perspective to recognize that there is great value in a university concerning itself with the history of its own community and region. Bolton produced solid studies, collected significant primary sources, and trained competent researchers and teachers. His historical generalizations may seem out of date to contemporary scholars, but his career still contains an important lesson for his academic successors. It is that regional and local history is a serious and valuable area of study, one that a great university should not ignore.

*The Economic Aspects of the California Missions.*

By Robert Archibald. (Washington: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1978. xiii, 196 pp. \$17.50.)

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*Reviewed by W. Michael Mathes, Professor of History at the University of San Francisco, and author of books and articles on the Spanish Californias.*

While the Franciscan missions of Alta California have been the subject of numerous publications, popular and scholarly, specialized studies of certain aspects of the mission system have been relatively few. This new publication of the Academy of American Franciscan History fills a definite need in the field of mission history and is an important contribution to it.

In general, economic history is neither exciting nor spell-binding, and this book is no exception. Furthermore, the reader should be familiar with general mission history prior to examining the economic aspects of it, for the author presupposes such familiarity and limits this study to pastoral, agricultural, mercantile, and financial considerations of the mission system.

Opening with an overview of the Spanish economic system, the author deals with the special nature of Pious Fund allotments, the legal status of San Blas as the supply depot for the Californias, and the *reglamentos* of Gálvez, Escheveste, and Neve relative to price controls and stipends in the mission system. During the early period of missionization in Alta California (1768-1781), price regulation was possible due to the total dependence upon San Blas; however, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, as agriculture and stock raising were established at the missions, they became increasingly self-sufficient, prices were subject to a more realistic supply-demand factor, and dependence upon San Blas became limited to manufactured goods and "luxury" items.

On the local level within Alta California proper, Chapters 4 and 5 deal with the often confusing aspects of mission accounting and reporting, the *formatos* for annual *padrones*, and the interdependence between missions, civilians, presidios, and government. The latter chapter clarifies the nature of the highly publicized conflicts of authority between the religious and secular state, disputes on paper relative to jurisdictional and fiscal responsibility, which was poorly defined on the frontier of New Spain. Trade, legal and

illegal, with the outside world is treated in Chapter 6 with a discussion of the philosophy of smuggling, and Chapter 7 examines the nature of labor, Indian and Spanish, within the mission system. The concluding chapter deals with the nature and levels of mission agriculture and stock raising, problems of adaptation and mutual support, and the ultimate success of these enterprises which served as cornerstones for modern California's agribusiness.

Extensive archival research by the author in the Biblioteca Nacional and Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico, Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla, The Bancroft Library, Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, University of Texas, and Santa Barbara Mission Archives among others make this book a valuable source for early California history. A few errors in Spanish (lack of accents on Fagés and Garcés; "peons" for *peones*) do not severely detract from the contents, and an extensive bibliography enhances this scholarly addition to Californiana.

*A Gift to the Street.*

By Carol Olwell and Judith Lynch Waldhorn. (San Francisco: Antelope Island Press, 1978. 195 pp. \$12.95.)

*Painted Ladies: San Francisco's Resplendent Victorians.*

By Morley Baer, Elizabeth Pomada, and Michael Larsen. (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1978. 80 pp. \$19.95.)

*Victoria's Legacy: Tours of San Francisco Bay Area Architecture.*

By Judith Lynch Waldhorn and Sally B. Woodbridge. (San Francisco: 101 Productions, 1978. 224 pp. Paper \$5.95.)

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*Reviewed by Elinor Richey, author of books, articles, and encyclopedia essays on architecture and biography.*

Vilified not long ago, Victorian domestic architecture today is almost venerated. Is it reaction against sterile modern architecture? Or a yearning for the halcyon era of flickering gaslight? Never mind why, aficionados are legion, and so are books to nourish them, among the new ones being two handsome pictorials and a handy guidebook.

Both pictorials confine themselves to San Francisco Vic-





*Architectural details of a weathered but proud San Francisco Victorian.*

torian residences; both have brief adequate texts; both have first-rate photographs, knowledgeably focused with a view to delineating architectural line; and both valuably supply street addresses of the houses portrayed. But there the similarity ends. *A Gift to the Street*, a revision of a 1976 book, contains black and white photographs which show us typical San Francisco Victorians, the kind that charmed their way back into our affection. Big ones and little ones, these are mostly painted white or in neutral shades with a complementary trim. The more than 300 photographs by Carol Olwell present a visual feast, variously of generous full views; architectural features such as doorways, windows, cornices, towers; and ornament details including wrought iron, stained glass, plaster faces, and scroll-work. How soothing architectural fretwork can be! We realize how right we were in reembracing it. Architectural ornament fills a real emotional need not satisfied by the merely utilitarian.

*Painted Ladies* with Morley Baer's sharp, arresting color photographs focuses more narrowly on a particular kind of Victorian, those which have joined the controversial Colorist Movement. This practice, which sprang up in San Francisco in the late 1960s and is growing, involves painting Victorian houses in a variety of bright colors, up to eleven different hues, some schemes including such startling combinations as violet and red, deep greens and blues, lilac and silver, orange and blue, crimson and black. Paint jobs in this mode have aroused the ire of both adjacent residents and aesthetes who decry their departure from tradition. Actually some Victorians were originally given coats of variegated colors, but they were muted earth tones, not these bright primary colors which borrow from modern art. Indeed, some of the combinations might have come right off Mondrian's un-mixed palette. To be sure, these painted ladies, or gilded lilies, have their ardent admirers. But as reaction to them tends to be very polarized, you'd best not give this item as a gift unless you know the recipient's bias.

The guidebook, *Victoria's Legacy: Tours of San Francisco Bay Area Architecture*, has the widest geographical scope, covering the Bay Area from Marin to the Peninsula, from Vallejo to San Jose. Illustrated with both line drawings and black and white photographs, it also supplies maps and other explicit directives to take the reader on rewarding walking tours of San Francisco and on driving tours of the other areas. There are informed essays on construction methods, on the various architectural styles of the era, and on residence interiors—the parlors, kitchens, plumbing, and decoration. The more than a thousand structures that are illustrated or described were mostly built between 1870 and 1906 and include both architect-designed residences and those planned and built by carpenters. Many of the latter were tract developers who duplicated row after row of houses which differed only in the arrangements of the wooden ornament on their fronts. Their sides and rears are usually featureless, the sort of house which gave rise to the expression “a Queen Anne front and a Mary Ann behind.” Ornament components were ordered from planing mill catalogues, and clients were often given a say in the selection and arrangement of the sunbursts, floral cuts, colonnettes, bargeboards, and cartouches. Many such houses sold for less than \$1000. To track down the identity of the carpenters and owners of these modest dwellings, as the authors earnestly did, seems misplaced scholarship. Perhaps the taste pendulum has swung too far when merely pleasant houses are treated as candidates for greatness.

The photographs are from the CHS Collections.

Inadvertantly omitted from the Spring 1979 (volume 58, number 1) issue of *California History* was the source of an illustration appearing in Karl Feichtmeier's article on the online information revolution in California. The sample print-out supplied by the University of California, Berkeley, appearing on page 81, is from the database *America: History and Life* (copyright 1964–1978, ABC-Clio, Inc.).

# California Check List

By Gary Kurutz, *Library Director*

The California Check List provides notice of publication of books, pamphlets, and monographs pertaining to the history of California. Readers knowing of recent (1978-79) publications which need additional publicity are requested to send the following bibliographical information to the compiler of this list: Author, title, location and name of publisher, date of publication, number of pages, price, and address where item can be purchased if not carried at general bookstores.

Altieri, Genevieve. *The House on Grant Street*. San Carlos: Altsen Publications, 1978. 215 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 1033, San Carlos 94070. \$5.00.

Arkellian, Marjorie D. and George W. Neubert. *George Inness Landscapes: His Signature Years. 1884-1894*. Oakland: The Oakland Museum Art Department, 1978. 71 pp. Publisher, 100 Oak St., Oakland 94607.

Baird, Joseph A. (ed.) *Theodore Wores and the Beginning of Internationalism in Northern California Painting: 1874-1915*. Davis: Library Associates, 1978. 42 pp. Publisher, University Library, University of California, Davis.

Bleyhl, Norris A. *Indian-White Relations in Northern California 1849-1920*. Chico: Northeastern Regional Program, 1978. 106 pp. Publisher, California State University, Chico 95927.

Bradley, Bill. *The Last of the Great Stations (Los Angeles' Union Station)*. Glendale: Interurbans, 1979. 110 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 6444, Glendale 91205. \$9.95.

Doss, Margot Patterson. *Golden Gate Park at Your Feet*. (rev. ed.). San Rafael: Presidio Press, 1978. 173 pp. Publisher, Box 3515, San Rafael 94902. \$4.95.

———. *There, There. East San Francisco Bay at Your Feet*. San Rafael: Presidio Press, 1978. 304 pp. \$6.95.

Heizer, Robert F. *The California Indians vs. the United States of America (HR 4497)*. Socorro: Ballena Press, 1978. 130 pp. Publisher: P.O. Box 1366, Socorro, New Mexico 87801. \$5.95.

Hill, Dorothy. *Indians of Chico Rancheria*. Sacramento: Department of Parks and Recreation, 1978. Publisher: P.O. Box 2390, Sacramento 95811. \$4.50.

Hislop, Donald L. *The Nomee Lackee Indian Reservation 1854-1870*. Chico: Association for Northern California Records and Research, 1978. 97 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 3024, Chico 95927. \$7.00.

Howe, Graham et al. (editors). *Two Views of Manzanar: An Exhibition of Photographs by Ansel Adams/Toyo Miyatake*. Los Angeles: Frederick S. Wight Gallery, 1978. 55 pp. Publisher, University of California, Los Angeles 90024. \$5.00.

Kuehn, Gernot. *Views of Los Angeles: 125 Black and White Photographs Contrasting the Past with the Present*. Los Angeles: Portriga Publications, 1978. 138 pp. Publisher, 823 N. Edinburgh Ave., Los Angeles 90046. \$12.95.

Levinson, Robert E. *The Jews in the California Gold Rush*. New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1978. 232 pp.

Lewis, Betty. *Watsonville Yesterday*. Watsonville: Mehl's Colonial Chapel, 1978. 146 pp. Available at: Pajaro Valley Historical Association, 261 E. Beach St., Watsonville 95076. \$3.00.

Limbaugh, Ronald H. and Walter A. Payne. *Vacaville. The Heritage of a California Community*. Vacaville: Vacaville City Council, 1978. 325 pp.

McCunn, Ruthanne Lum. *An Illustrated History of the Chinese in America*. San Francisco: Design Enterprises, 1979. 133 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 27677, San Francisco 94127. Cloth \$11.95, paper \$6.95.

McGloin, John Bernard. *San Francisco. The Story of a City*. San Rafael: Presidio Press, 1979. 394 pp. \$16.95.

Masri, Allan and Peter Abenheim. *The Golden Hills of California. A Descriptive Guide to the Mother Lode Counties of the Southern Mines*. Fresno: Valley Publisher, 1979. 156 pp. Publisher, 8 East Olive Ave., Fresno 93728. \$4.95.

Mayer, Robert. *San Diego: A Chronological and Documentary History 1535-1976*. Dobbs

- Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, 1978. 153 pp. \$7.50.
- Meschery, Joanne. *Truckee. An Illustrated History of the Town and Its Surroundings*. Truckee: Rocking Stone Press, 1978. 114 pp. Publisher, Box 1297, Truckee 95734. No price listed.
- Messner, Mike. *Steinbeck Country in Dubious Homage*. Salinas: by the author, 1979. 28 pp. Author, 309 Rose St., Salinas 93901. \$1.25.
- Morrall, June. *Half Moon Bay Memories. The Coastside's Colorful Past*. El Granada: Moonbeam Press, 1978. 176 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 802, El Granada 94018. \$11.95.
- Mossier, Dan L. *California Coal Towns, Coaling Stations and Landings*. San Leandro: Mines Road Books, 1979. 8 pp. Publisher, 1289 Breckenridge St., San Leandro 94579. 85c.
- . *Harrisville and the Livermore Coal Mines*. San Leandro: Mines Road Books, 1978. 184 pp. \$7.00.
- Mutmick, Dorothy G. *One View of Gabriel Moraga and Some of His Explorations*. Lafayette: Past Time, 1979. 57 pp. Publisher, 755 Glenside Dr., Lafayette 94549. \$5.82.
- Norton, Jack. *Genocide in Northwestern California*. San Francisco: The Indian Historian Press, 1979. 155 pp. Publisher, The Chautauqua House, 1451 Masonic Ave., San Francisco 94117. \$9.95.
- Orton, Richard H. *Records of California Men in the War of the Rebellion, 1861 to 1867*. (reprint). Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1978. Publisher, Book Tower, Detroit, Michigan 48226. \$45.00. Index volume, \$22.00.
- Osborne, Robert. *50 Golden Years of Oscar: The Official History of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences*. La Habra: ESE Publications, 1979. 275 pp. Publisher, 509 N. Harbor Blvd., La Habra 90631. \$24.95.
- Paquette, Mary Grace. *Lest We Forget. The History of the French in Kern County*. Bakersfield: Kern County Historical Society, 1978. 162 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 141, Bakersfield 93302. \$11.95.
- Parker, J. Caryle (ed.). *An Index to the Biographees in 19th Century California County Histories*. Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1979. 279 pp. \$22.00.
- Przygoda, Jack (ed.). *Polish Americans in California 1827-1977*. Los Angeles: Polish American Historical Association, California Chapter, 1978. 372 pp. Publisher, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles 90045. \$12.00.
- Reed, Robert D. *How and Where to Research Your Ethnic-American Cultural Heritage: Mexican Americans*. Saratoga: by the author, 1979. 28 pp. Author, 18581 McFarland Ave., Saratoga 95070. \$2.95.
- Reinhardt, Richard. *Treasure Island, 1939-1940: San Francisco Exposition Years*. Mill Valley: Squarebooks, Inc. 176 pp. \$6.95.
- Roos, Dudley T. (ed.). *The Golden Gazette. News from the Newspapers of 1848-1857*. Fresno: Valley Publishers, 1978. 117 pp. \$7.50.
- Showalter, J. Camille (ed.). *The Many Mizners*. Oakland: The Oakland Museum, 1978. 68 pp. Publisher, 100 Oak St., Oakland 94607. \$8.50.
- Thrapp, Dan L. *Dateline Fort Bowie. Charles Fletcher Lummi's Reports on an Apache War*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979. 206 pp. \$10.95.
- Time-Life Books. *The Gamblers (The Old West)*. Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, 1978. 240 pp. \$10.00.
- Touring with Madge Ditmas*. Arroyo Grande: South (San Luis Obispo) County Historical Society, 1978. Publisher, Box 633, Arroyo Grande 93420. \$2.00.
- Tutorow, Norman E. *Leland Stanford: Man of Many Careers*. Palo Alto: Chadwick House, 1978. 332 pp. Publisher, 200 California Ave., Suite 207, Palo Alto 94306. \$9.95.
- Unruh, John D. *The Plains Across. The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-60*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979. 565 pp. Publisher, Urbana, Illinois 61801. \$22.50.
- Weber, Francis J. (ed.). *Andrew Garriga's Compilation of Herb & Remedies Used by the Indians & Spanish Californians*. Los Angeles: The Plantin Press, 1978. 57 pp. Available at: Dawson's Book Shop, Los Angeles. \$20.00.
- . *California, the Golden State*. San Buenaventura: Junípero Serra Press, 1979. 26 pp. Available at: Dawson's Book Shop. \$10.00.
- . (ed.) *The Observation of Benjamin Cummings Truman on El Camino Real*. Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1978. 109 pp. \$20.00.
- Winroth, Elizabeth (compiler). *Union Guide to Photograph Collections in the Pacific Northwest*. Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1978. 419 pp. Publisher, 1230 S.W. Park, Portland, Oregon. \$15.00.



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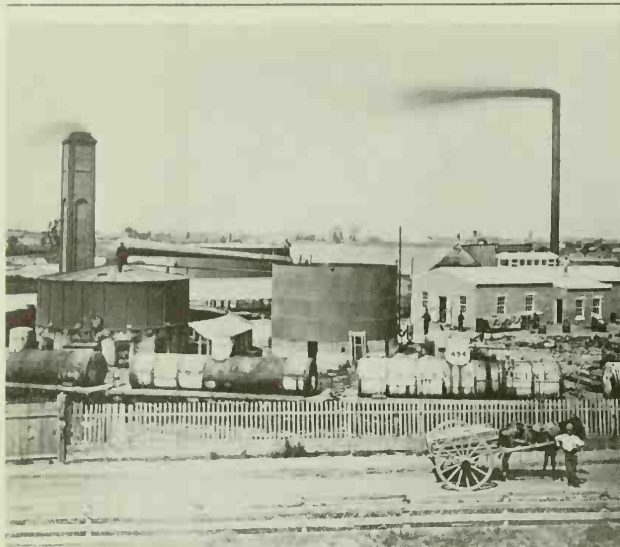
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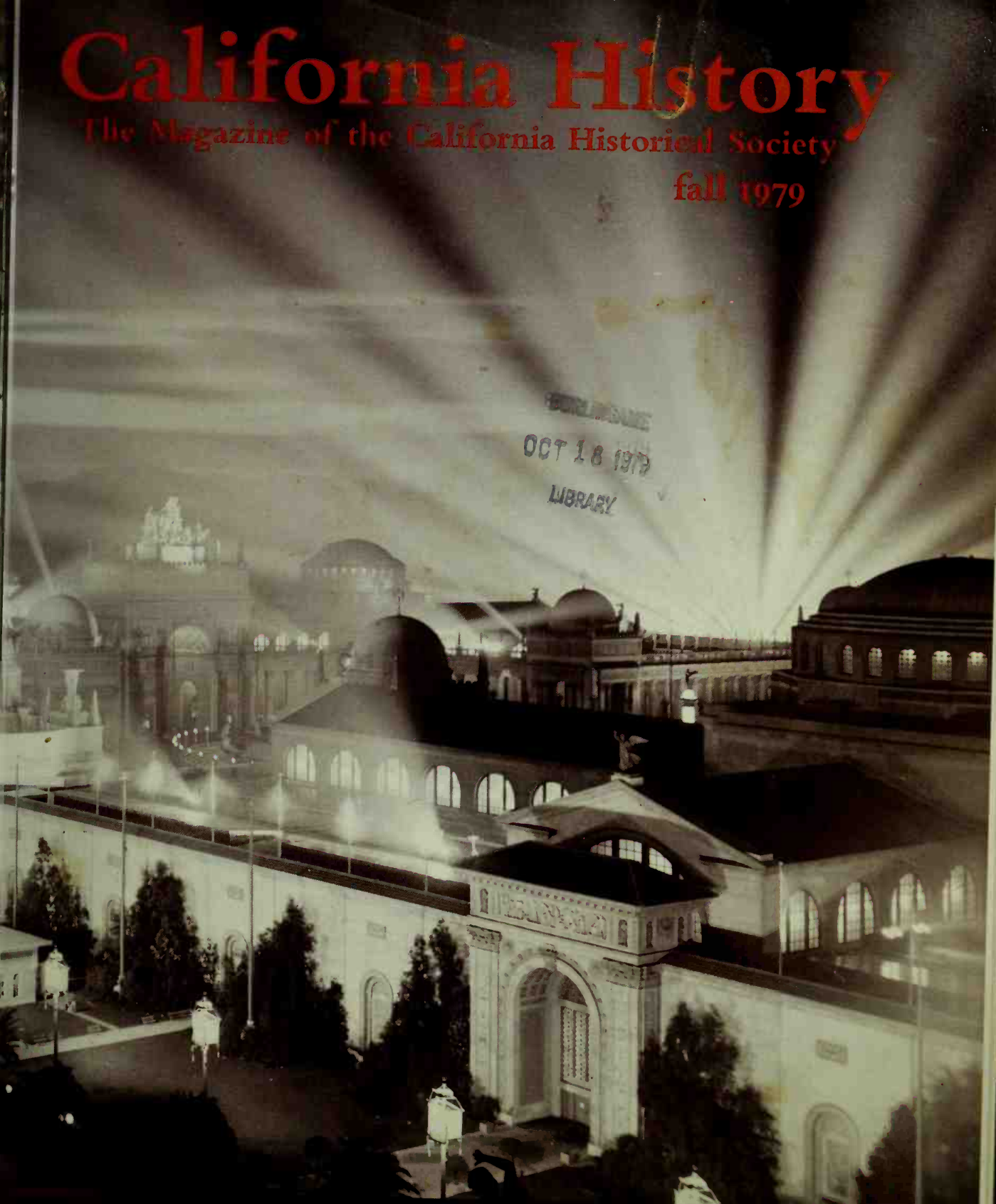
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The Magazine of the California Historical Society

fall 1979

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#### COVER

Lighting created a mood of glamorous excitement  
at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition  
in San Francisco in 1915. Marking the national  
Centennial of Light in 1979, California also  
celebrates its own contribution to the development  
of electric lighting—the central generating  
station which distributed electricity to customers'  
premises. For this story, turn to the article  
beginning on page 234. *California Historical Society*.

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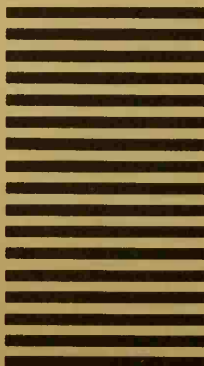
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# California History

The Magazine of the California Historical Society

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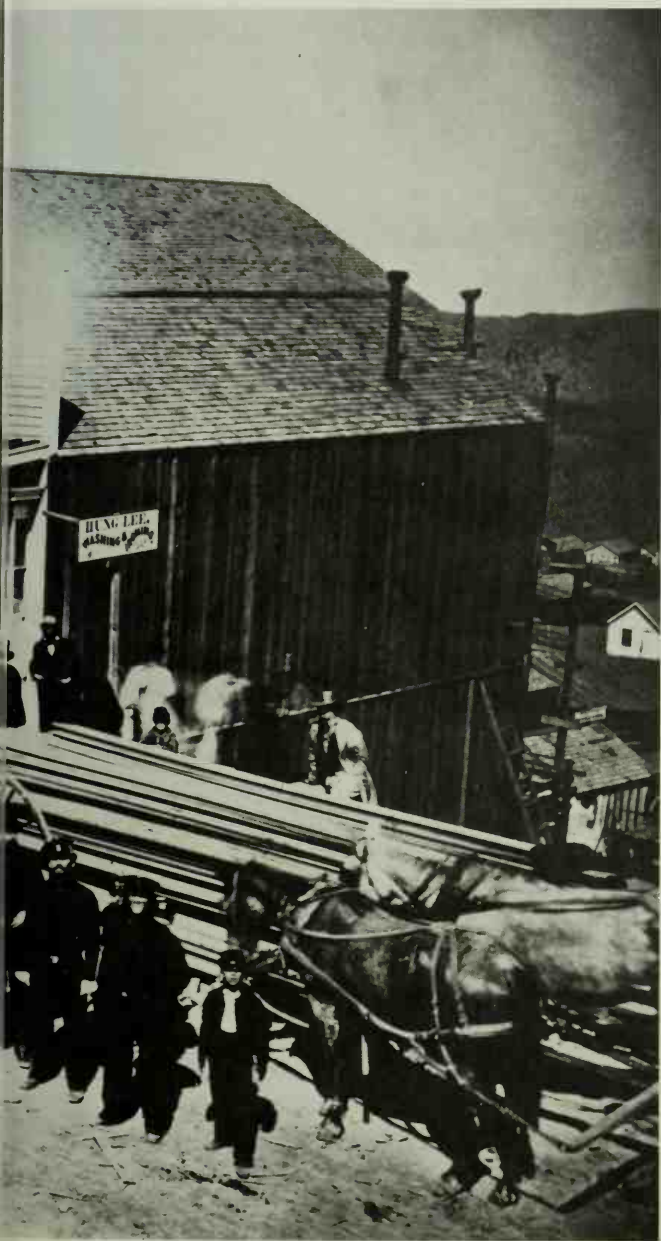
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*Virginia City's volunteer firemen proudly posed for Weed's camera on July 4, 1862. The resulting image of patriotic solidarity is probably Nevada's first photographic print on paper.*





## CALIFORNIA'S PERIPATETIC PHOTOGRAPHER

# Charles Leander Weed

*California's image as a natural paradise began with the early explorers who returned home with incredible tales of the land's rugged beauty. Wherever they journeyed, sailors and trappers quickly spread their stories far and wide. In their poignant letters and diaries, the California Argonauts of the mid-nineteenth century only served to amplify the developing legend. Soon, aroused and curious armchair travelers demanded pictorial confirmation—sketches, paintings, and the best record of all, photographs—of the seemingly exaggerated and unreal California marvels.*

Not surprisingly, however, the earliest California "sun artists" who accompanied the gold rush focused mainly on the likenesses of the men and women in the midst of the great adventure. Almost without exception, outdoor photographs from Forty-niner days reflect only man-centered places—mines, homesteads, towns. The landscape itself remained largely undocumented until the 1860s, perhaps because the very business of survival demanded that man brand the awesome, possibly hostile terrain with his mark before he rest and contemplate the poetry of the land itself.

Following close on the heels of the traveling artists who painted pictures of the countryside, several daguerrean operators attempted to capture the essence of the California mystique for curious easterners. In 1851, for instance, Robert H. Vance produced a series of 300 daguerreotypes depicting the California frontier. In the same year, John Wesley Jones ambitiously set out to complete a series of 1500 daguerreotypes showing every prominent geographical feature between the Pacific Ocean and the Missouri River! Daguerreotypes, however, were one-of-a-kind images which could not be duplicated for wide distribution and ownership. Not until the introduction of the new collodion wet-plate process could relatively inexpensive negatives be made for producing multiple photographs on paper. This important development made it possible to bring nature (and almost anything else) to viewers "back home."

Accordingly, the photographic business itself underwent a radical change. Itinerant photographers were soon superseded by businessmen who owned and operated galleries for profit. These men hired photographers and production staffs, and the artists behind the published or mass-produced photo-

graphs became increasingly anonymous. Charles Leander Weed was one of these largely overlooked artists—a brilliant photographer of the California landscape whose rediscovered photographic works will earn him a lasting place in the history of American photography.

Western photography of the nineteenth century has recently garnered news headlines. *Newsweek* and the *New York Times*, among others, devoted a significant amount of space to a recent auction of early-day landscape photography. The reason? A single album of California views by Carleton E. Watkins fetched \$100,000. Such men as Watkins and Eadweard J. Muybridge have achieved international acclaim for their magnificent photographs. Today their images are scarce and deservedly valuable, yet their works are not nearly as rare as those of another photographer of the California terrain.

On a sunny morning 120 years ago, a photographer named Charles Leander Weed produced the "first ever" photograph of Yosemite Valley's scenic splendors. "Magnificent, wonderful, excellent . . .," praised critics and public alike, seemingly assuring Weed's further artistic success and reputation. Yet, Weed appeared hardly to notice his many admirers or to try to increase his reputation, for within a few months he had jumped into a totally new and more ambitious camera adventure in the Orient.

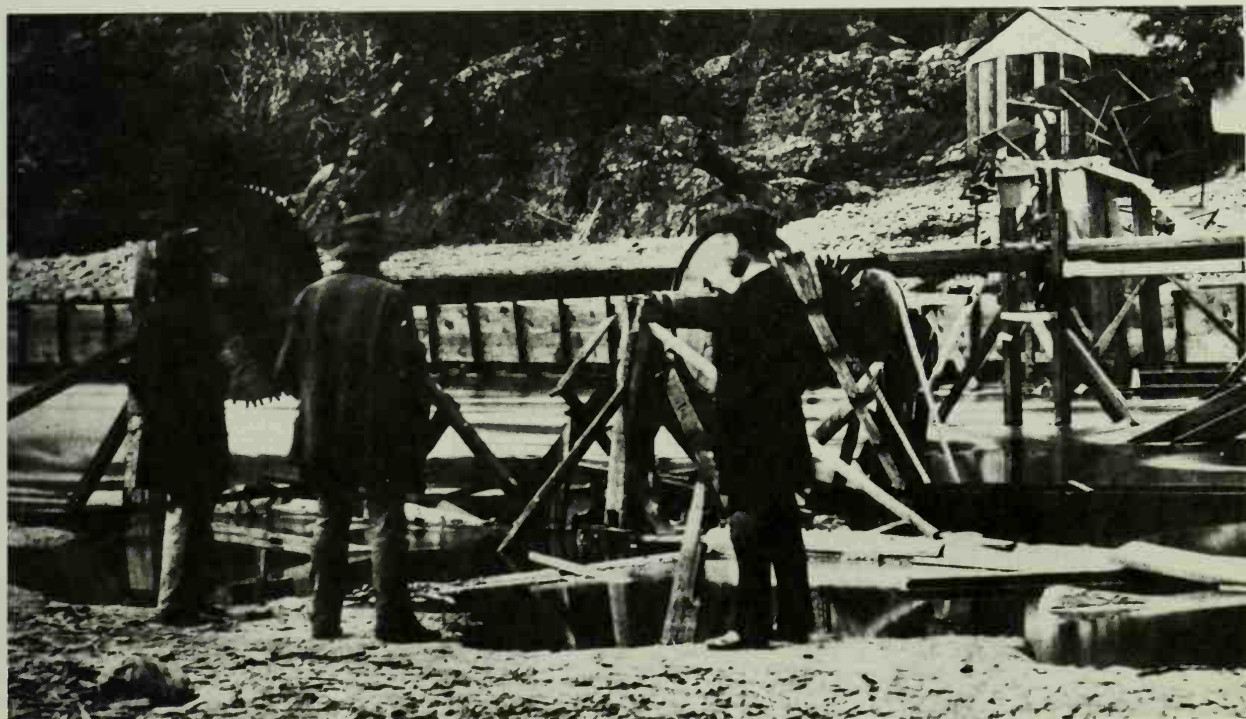
Weed's remarkable journey to establish a photographic gallery in Hong Kong in 1860 was only one in a string of noteworthy photographic achievements garnered by this unheralded man. In 1858, for example, Weed appears to have been the first photographer to use the new collodion wet-plate process to produce paper prints of rural California. The result was a series of rare mining views on the rugged and remote American River. While in Yosemite in 1859, Weed was probably the first image-

---

Peter Palmquist is the author of several books and articles on early California photographers. His study of Carleton Watkins' career as a publisher of photographs appeared in the Fall, 1978, issue of *California History* devoted to Watkins. He is employed as a photographer at Humboldt State University, Arcata, California.

The section of the article on Weed's activities in Hawaii has been written by Lynn Davis, Photo Librarian at the Bernice P. Bishop Museum in Honolulu, and Susan Shaner, Archivist, Hawaii State Archives in Honolulu.

*The man standing on the right on the American River sandbar may well be Weed. As professional men, photographers usually wore formal attire in the wilderness. An assistant brought along on the expedition to help make the large-plate images could have taken the photograph.*



maker to make wet-plate stereographs in the Golden State. Similarly, in 1862 Weed may well have been the earliest to take large-size wet-plate views of the mining regions of Nevada.

Weed's 1864 mammoth-plate views (approximately 18" x 21") of Yosemite won the international award for landscape photography at the 1867 Paris Exposition. (The famed Carleton Watkins did not win a prize until the following year.) In 1865 Weed also gained the distinction of being the first artist to produce mammoth-plate photographs of the Hawaiian Islands, including three views of the magnificent volcanic crater of Haleakala on Maui. In addition, on this same visit in Hawaii, he also made an unprecedented series of mammoth-plate portraits. In 1860 and again during the period 1866 to

1869, Weed became one of the very few westerners able to establish a working photography business in the Far East under conditions which were often hostile to foreigners.

Startling as these accomplishments may seem, many of them have gone unrecognized by historians of the development of photography. Throughout a career that spanned several continents and more than forty years, Weed quietly and quickly produced photographs in a wide range of common and uncommon settings in places as diverse as Singapore and Red Bluff, California. Although he pioneered what might be considered the genre of Yosemite photographs, he has been far overshadowed by California's more famous landscape photographers, Watkins and Muybridge. Ironically, some of





*This image of Yosemite's Three Brothers reflects Weed's early personal style as well as the approach favored by early landscape photographers.*

Weed's views of Yosemite have in fact been intermingled with the works of the two giants.

Some twenty years have passed since researchers Mary and Bill Hood discovered a long-neglected series of photographs in the Yosemite Park Museum and undertook to reconstruct the circumstances of their origin. The Hoods' painstaking work and sharp insights led to identification of Weed's 1858 American River Series and proof of his seminal Yosemite work of 1859.

Recently, other scholars have supplied significant pieces to the puzzle of Weed's career: Clark Worswick's discovery of Weed's sojourn in Hong Kong, Singapore, and other places in the Far East; Lynn Davis and Susan Shaner's recognition of Weed's mammoth-plate views of Maui (see below); Paul T. Shafer's identification of the addresses and associations of yesterday's peripatetic photographers; and Pauline Grenbeaux, Nanette Sexton, Jack Gyer, Eldon Gruppe, and many others' efforts to distinguish Weed's works from those of other pioneer photographers.

Because of the relatively few original works which are firmly known to be Weed's, the process of establishing his pictorial legacy has been difficult. Weed did not commonly sign or otherwise identify his prints, nor did he advertise his activities as avidly as his contemporaries. He also appears to have been reticent to exploit his accomplishments, a failing which has been compounded by some historians' dismissal of Weed's photographs as technically poor or artistically primitive. Nevertheless, while Weed's landscape views may lack the perfection of Watkins or Muybridge at their best, Weed deserves considerable credit for his pioneering photographic efforts.

The search for information about Weed's life is far from finished. For example, little is known of Weed's life prior to his arrival in California. Born in New York state on July 17, 1824,<sup>1</sup> he probably moved to Wisconsin at an early age, where he remained until traveling west. He may have journeyed overland to California.

By the winter of 1854, Weed was firmly established at

66 J Street in Sacramento where he worked as a camera operator for daguerrean George W. Watson. Watson had recently acquired these premises from James M. Ford, another pioneer daguerrean who had traveled west in 1849. At approximately the same time that Weed joined Watson, the firm expanded into Henry W. Bradley's recently vacated daguerrean rooms next door at 68 J Street.<sup>2</sup>

Watson and Weed specialized in portrait photography. With immodesty typical of the times, the firm boasted that its new rooms and large north skylight would insure its patrons "a perfect likeness, possessing all the brilliancy of tone and lifelike expression of the eye, giving boldness and roundness to the features like a beautiful painting on ivory."<sup>3</sup>

By February, 1858, Watson's gallery had been taken over by another pioneer photographer, William Shew. Meanwhile, Weed had become allied with Robert H. Vance's new ambrotype gallery in the Hiller & Andrews' Building at the northeast corner of Third and J streets. Although Vance had established himself in Sacramento as early as June, 1852, this gallery was subordinate to his principal location on Montgomery Street in San Francisco. An effective entrepreneur, Vance was deservedly known as California's foremost daguerrean during the 1850s.<sup>4</sup>

Weed became Vance's junior partner and manager of the Sacramento operation. Opened as "Vance & Co.," it soon became known as "Vance & Weed."<sup>5</sup> Its first advertisement in the *Sacramento Union* reflects Vance's well-known self-promotional skills: "We Challenge the World to beat the Premium Daguerreotypes and Photographs we are now producing at our rooms daily."<sup>6</sup> Vance & Weed's offerings included "Cutting's Ambrotype Process," in which the photographic image was sealed between two pieces of glass to render the image waterproof. Vance prided himself on being first to introduce new photographic processes and techniques in California.



## Vance's Branch---New Gallery.

### AMBROTYPES,

PHOTOGRAPHS, DAGUERREOTYPES AND MELAINOTYPES.

## VANCE & CO.,

N. E. Corner J and Third Streets,  
[Hiller & Andrews' Building.]  
SACRAMENTO,



Having fitted up a large suite of Rooms at the above place, in a manner unsurpassed in the State for richness of fittings, accommodations for visitors, and arrangement of lights, are now prepared to take any of the above styles of Pictures at 25 per cent. less than our former prices, and 100 per cent. better than can be obtained elsewhere in this city. Being the owners of JAMES A. CUTTING'S PATENT RIGHT for atmospherically sealing Ambrotypes, we shall give our patrons the

## Genuine Patent Ambrotypes

Which, since their introduction at our establishment in San Francisco, have gained such popularity. We shall also take, as usual, our

## PREMIUM DAGUERREOTYPES!

And PHOTOGRAPHS, as heretofore, in a manner unsurpassed anywhere.

The genuine Ambrotype is cemented between two glasses; and as there is no space between them, no dampness can collect.

With prompt attention and good work, we trust to meet here with the success we have had in San Francisco. We invite all to call and see our rooms and specimens, whether in want of Pictures or not.

## VANCE & CO.,

San Francisco and Sacramento.

Weed made images for Vance when this advertisement for Vance's Sacramento and San Francisco galleries appeared in the San Francisco City Directory.

cisco.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, the wet-plate paper print procedure had rarely been used outside city studios or taken into rural California. Accordingly, Vance obtained a large wet-plate camera and charged Weed with the responsibility of taking the equipment into the field. It was an inspired assignment.

In October, 1858, Weed traveled up the Middle Fork of the American River to photograph river mining scenes, penetrating the wilderness as far as the community of Forest Hill, some fifteen miles from Auburn.<sup>10</sup> Vance most likely sponsored this excursion with the expectation of gaining a striking display of California mining scenes for his San Francisco showrooms. Perhaps the great acclaim garnered earlier that year by James M. Hutchings' publication, *The Miners' Own Book: California Mining, Containing Correct Illustrations and Descriptions of the Various Modes of California Mining*, provided the impetus for the Vance-Weed expedition.

As editor and publisher of *Hutchings' California Magazine*, Hutchings approached the wonders of the California environment with missionary zeal. Like Vance, he believed that quality images of California would be well received, particularly in the East. Possibly Vance set out to prove that on-site photography would offer much greater accuracy than the fanciful images made by Hutchings' "sketch" artists and be commercially successful as well.<sup>11</sup>

To the photographer's certain dismay, however, the twenty-odd views which comprised Weed's American River series did not receive more than a modicum of public attention. Shortly before Weed returned from his expedition, Vance's San Francisco gallery suffered a disastrous fire.<sup>12</sup> Because Vance had no other suitable display space for the American River "panorama," its showing was greatly delayed.

Although Vance & Weed worked well together, growing competition with other galleries and Vance's other interests (including real estate investments) probably began to inhibit the firm's development. Therefore, the partners moved to introduce another significant development to buttress Vance's business claim, "always something new." The resulting new contribution capitalized on Vance's recent experiment with colloidal wet-plate glass negatives to make prints on "salt" paper.<sup>7</sup>

Paper prints were not completely new in California. At the California State Fair in 1855, for instance, J. W. Johnston had won a special premium for "magnificent photographic portraits on paper."<sup>8</sup> The following year, George Robinson Fardon utilized the process to produce a fine series of buildings and street scenes in San Fran-



Although Weed's American River series failed to gain public attention, a few observers were moved to comment on the exhibition. Publicist and artist Edward Vischer, for example, reflected in 1859 that "rich material for observation is offered in the photographic views of the American River region exhibited in Vance's [Weed's] Panorama. Similar photographs of other mining regions would complete a picture gallery, the inspection of which would almost be a substitute for a visit to the places themselves."<sup>13</sup>

During the spring of 1859, Weed moved to San Francisco to assist with the re-opening of Vance's newly-refurbished studio.<sup>14</sup> Eager to expand what he had begun, he continued his outdoor expeditions from his San Francisco base. In June of that year—probably on the basis of the little-known but important American River views—Weed was asked by Hutchings to accompany him to Yosemite. Mary Hood, chronicler of Weed's activity in Yosemite, explains that Hutchings was invited to attend the grand opening of the first two-story hotel in Yosemite so that he could produce a series of illustrated articles for his magazine. As part of the promotion, Weed was to make a "Yosemite Panorama" consisting of 10" x 14" photographs which would be added to the Vance firm's inventory and also serve as the basis for engravings in Hutchings' articles. According to Hood, Weed "covered the floor of the valley and took his heavy equipment to the base of Nevada and Illilouette Falls."<sup>15</sup>

Although Hutchings later wrote copiously about the journey, he never mentioned Weed by name. He did, however, discuss the equipment of the accompanying photographer: "The reader would have laughed could he have seen us ready for the start. Mr. Beardsley, who had volunteered to carry the camera, had it inverted and strapped at his back, where it looked more like an Italian "hurdy-gurdy" than a photographic instrument. . . . Another carried the stereoscopic instrument and the lunch; another, the plate-holders and gun."<sup>16</sup>

After many calculations and observations, researchers

*This view of Yosemite Falls made by Weed in June, 1859, is the first known photograph of the Yosemite area.*



have concluded that the first photograph to be taken in Yosemite, one of the most photographed natural settings in the world, occurred at 11:25 A.M. on June 18, 1859, by Charles L. Weed.<sup>17</sup> Fittingly, Weed selected for his initial subject 2,500-foot Yosemite Falls, described in Hutchings' rapturous words as "an indescribable sight . . . [which] rushes over the cliffs, and with one bold leap falls 1200 feet, then a second of 500 feet more, then a third of over 500 feet more. . . ."<sup>18</sup> By the time of the conclusion of his historic visit to Yosemite's wonders, Weed had produced at least twenty large glass-plate negatives and forty stereo views.<sup>19</sup>

Within a few days of Weed's return to San Francisco,

Weed's view of Yosemite Falls provided the visual information for the engraving printed on the cover of Hutchings' Magazine.

his Yosemite stereographs became a featured attraction at Vance's establishment. Reporting the occasion, the *San Francisco Times* observed,

Mr. C. L. Weed, one of the most accomplished daguerrean and photographic artists in America, has just returned from a visit to the Yosemite Valley where he took, for Mr. Vance, some forty stereoscopic views of that celebrated locality. The views are arranged within the machine [probably a Becker-style stereo device] so that the observer by simply turning a screw on the outside has them placed successively before him. Every important place about the valley, the giant cliffs, the huge pines, the memorable waterfalls and cataracts, and in fact all but the reality is vividly depicted. . . . Each tree, rock, sprig, and cliff seems to stand out boldly and clearly. The great waterfalls, glistening in the sunlight, are seen leaping out from the crags and hang in mid air as clearly as if witnessed in nature. The views have been judiciously taken, are admirable specimens of the art, and may be seen at Vance's Photographic Gallery, corner of Montgomery and California Streets.<sup>20</sup>

A short time later, the larger views which Weed had taken in Yosemite were likewise assembled into a gala display which the *San Francisco Times* headlined: "Ho! for Yo-Semite Valley. A magnificent Photographic Parnorama of the Great YoSemite Valley, with its immense Waterfalls, Cascades, Cataracts, Etc., in all their wild mountain grandeur, with scenes in the Mariposa grove of Mammoth Trees, etc., etc., can now been seen, free of charge, at Vance's Photographic Gallery."<sup>21</sup>

In the meantime, Hutchings' artists rendered engravings of Weed's Yosemite images for a series of articles entitled "The Great Yo-Semite Valley" which appeared in *Hutchings' California Magazine*.<sup>22</sup> Mary Hood has suggested that in these articles the engravings attributed to Weed are made from his large prints, the smaller plates with rounded corners from his stereo views, and the remainder directly from other artist's sketches.<sup>23</sup>

Weed's 1859 Yosemite views continued to be used by Hutchings for many years.<sup>24</sup> Ordinarily, Hutchings credited the photographs to Weed, but later versions read

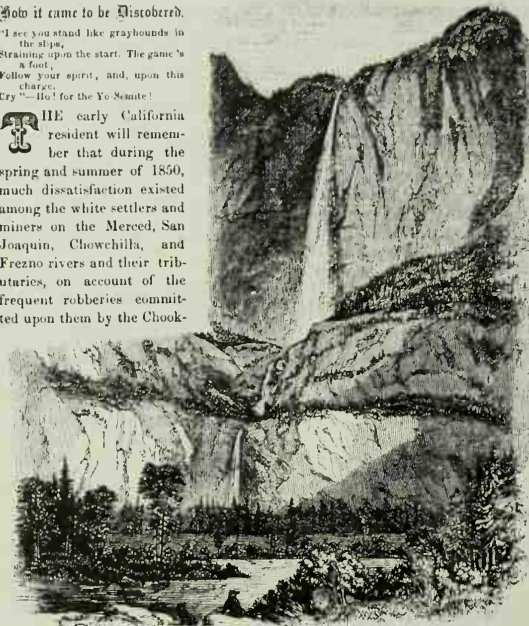
# HUTCHINGS' CALIFORNIA MAGAZINE.

VOL. IV. OCTOBER, 1859. No. 4.

## THE GREAT YO-SEMITE VALLEY. CHAPTER I.

How it came to be discovered.  
"I see you stand like grayhounds in the slips, straining upon the start. The game's a foot. Follow your spirit, and, upon this charge, Cry 'Ho!' for the Yo-Semite!"

THE early California resident will remember that during the spring and summer of 1850, much dissatisfaction existed among the white settlers and miners on the Merced, San Joaquin, Chowchilla, and Fresno rivers and their tributaries, on account of the frequent robberies committed upon them by the Chook-



THE YO-SEMITE FALL. TWO THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED FEET IN HEIGHT.  
[From a Photograph by C. L. Weed.]

"Photographs by Weed for R. H. Vance."<sup>25</sup> Because these views were linked in this way to Vance, their lineage has become confusingly blurred. For example, the Book Club of California's special publication, *A Camera in the Gold Rush* (1946), contained twelve of Weed's remarkable views incorrectly attributed to Vance.<sup>26</sup>

A perplexing aspect of Weed's early landscape photographs is their undeserved obscurity. If nothing else, it should be acknowledged that his 1859 Yosemite views reproduced in the widely-read *Hutchings' California Magazine* probably influenced Watkins to make his well-known sojourn in Yosemite in 1861. The 1861-63 mammoth-plate views on which Watkins' reputation for landscape photography is largely based are not without precedent. In fact, Weed's explorations in 1859 triggered



24 feet High  
Mile Falls.





*Announcing that Weed's Yosemite views were on display at Vance's gallery, this September 15, 1859, notice in the San Francisco Daily Times promised that "duplicates of each can be given at the shortest notice."*

## HO! FOR THE YO-SEMITE VALLEY

**A** **MAGNIFICENT PHOTOGRAPHIC PANORAMA** of the Great Yo Semite Valley, with its immense Waterfalls, Cascades, Cataracts, &c., in all their wild mountain grandeur, with scenes in the Mariposa grove of Mammoth Trees, &c., &c., can now be seen, free of charge, at **VANOE'S PHOTOGRAPHIC GALLERY**, corner of Montgomery and Sacramento streets, San Francisco.

These wonderful views were executed for Mr. V. by C. L. Weed, Esq., whose reputation as one of the best Photographers in the State is a sufficient guarantee that they are excellent specimens of the art. In addition to these, may be seen a large number of finely cut Stereoscopic views of these and other localities, on glass—the first ever executed in this country—and which are not simply pictures, but fac-similes of the spots themselves.

At the same Gallery may also be seen a series of large Photographs of many of the principal mining localities of the State, and numerous Stereoscopic views of San Francisco, Sacramento city and river, &c., &c.

Having the negatives of all the above, duplicates of each can be given at the shortest notice and at the lowest rates. All are invited to call and take a look at them.

au18 1m

an ongoing series of photographic investigations of the Yosemite region: Weed in 1859; Watkins in 1861–63; Weed in 1864; Watkins in 1864, 1865, and 1866; the mysterious W. Harris in 1866; Muybridge in 1867 and 1872; and so on until the present day.

Perhaps the burgeoning popular interest in stereoscopic photography spurred Weed to his next adventure—a visit to the Orient in 1860. Bringing the world into America's parlor, the stereoscopic viewer and its accompanying basket of stereo cards, in fact, became the most significant and influential mode of visual communication during the nineteenth century. Through the magic of these three-dimensional visual images, people could "see for themselves" lifelike images of faraway and exotic scenes and events as never before possible.

The Vance-Weed establishment was determined to

remain at the forefront of innovation in photography. The men's great interest in the stereo process was clearly shown by their gallery's advertisement which reads, "We have on exhibition and for sale at our rooms a collection of over Six Hundred Stereoscopic Views, comprising views of Egypt, the Holy Land, Turkey, France, Switzerland, Italy, England, Scotland, and many portions of the Eastern States."<sup>27</sup>

**A**lthough stereoscopic daguerreotypes had been produced in California as early as 1853—Vance himself was the first to advertise the process—the dual-image in its Mascher case proved unsuccessful because of cost and clumsiness. Not until the development of wet-plate paper prints which could be mounted on cards did stereo photography find popularity. Publishing of paper stereographs was well underway in the major East Coast cities by 1858, and by late 1860 no fewer than 200 United States photographers actively produced stereographs.<sup>28</sup>

Weed's 1859 stereo views of Yosemite mark the earliest known production of stereographs in California by the wet-plate method. While these views received popular acclaim when exhibited in Vance's San Francisco showrooms, they could not be fully exploited for commercial purposes without mass production and distribution. This need rapidly led to an arrangement between the Vance-Weed gallery and the well-established stereo publishing firm of Edward Anthony & Co. Located in New York, the firm acquired Weed's forty stereographs of Yosemite prior to May, 1860.<sup>29</sup> This company, later E. & H. T. Anthony & Co., continued to issue these views for many years without crediting the photographer.

At this time of great achievement, Weed also made his first visit to Hong Kong. No doubt his motives were both economic and artistic, and he probably sought to enter the international photographic market. By the end of the



*Weed showed his Yosemite photographs at Vance's Gallery in 1859 and ran the gallery from 1861 to 1863. Vance advertised the "largest [sky] lights in the city."*

1850s, intense competition among portrait photographers was beginning to raise havoc in the large galleries saddled with substantial overhead costs, and accordingly, many of the largest New York galleries had begun to move into new service areas as outlets—and sometimes as publishers—for imported stereoscopic views from Europe and elsewhere. Vance and Weed seemed determined to explore such an arrangement in the Orient.

Throughout 1859, Californians had grown increasingly interested in improving regular steamer traffic to China and Japan. Trade with "the millions of people in Japan and China" was urged by papers such as the *Sacramento Union*,<sup>30</sup> which claimed that Americans would benefit as well by access to the Orient's goods and labor. "The pear is nearly ripe," rallied the *Union*, "and it should be plucked before it falls into the lap of some other nation."<sup>31</sup>

Perhaps in this spirit, Weed and a man named Howard set out early in 1860 to establish a photographic gallery in Hong Kong. Vance probably participated in this venture through his principal San Francisco-gallery photographer, Milton M. Miller, who accompanied the expedition. On October 3, 1860, the *China Mail* reported, "Photographs and Ambrotypes, Messrs. Weed & Howard, will depart for Shanghai by the 2nd mail steamer of month."<sup>32</sup>

Whether or not the men were successful in the enterprise is unknown, and Miller shortly took over from Weed and Howard. By January 1, 1861, according to the *China Directory*, Miller ran a notice informing "residents and visitors of Hong Kong, that he has fitted up the room lately occupied by Mr. Howard, on the Parade Ground, and is now prepared to take photographic pictures of all kinds. Likenesses from miniature to life size, views of



*Captioned "The Heads: Entrance to the Bay of San Francisco: Golden Gate in the Distance," this stereograph image was one of seventy-eight California views issued by E. Anthony in its 1860 catalog. Weed's views appear to be the first wet-plate and paper-print stereo images made in the Far West.*

*Attributed to "Weed & Howard," this 1860 view of Peddlers' Wharf in the Hong Kong harbor offers a rare, early glimpse of the Orient.*





houses executed at short notice . . . a collection of views of various places for sale."<sup>33</sup>

Weed's China adventure was over. He returned to California to take charge of Vance's gallery while his senior partner traveled to Nevada, most likely in response to the exciting discovery of the Comstock Lode in late 1859. By the spring of 1860, miners were rushing to the Washoe Mines, and Vance hurried to establish photographic studios in Virginia City and Carson City. According to an 1864 account, however, "owing to business outside, and independent of that of the gallery, Mr. Vance could no longer give it his undivided attention; and in 1861, the San Francisco business passed into the hands of Mr. C. L. Weed."<sup>34</sup>

During the winter of 1861-62, Weed journeyed to Nevada with his large camera. While the circumstances are unknown, a series of landscape views known as the "Gold Canyon Panorama" testifies to the excursion.<sup>35</sup> No doubt the scenes were made at Vance's suggestion for hanging in his booming Virginia City establishment. A number of these fine images are reproduced in *A Camera in the Gold Rush* but incorrectly attributed therein to Vance.<sup>36</sup>

En route to Nevada in late 1861, Weed made at least one large photograph, as well as a series of stereographs of the flood in Sacramento which began in December and continued through January, 1862. Shortly after Weed's visit, the *Sacramento Bee* touted the stereographs under the headline: "Flood! Flood!—Stereoscopic Views of the principal streets of Sacramento. . . . These views are all taken from the most eligible points, and afford very correct ideas of how we looked when the waters were upon us."<sup>37</sup>

Although the flood stereographs were offered through the Vance galleries in both Sacramento and San Francisco, they were advertised as being available "for a short time only." In part this urgency was probably explained by Weed's need to continue on his photographic excursion to Nevada. There he made many large views,

particularly of major mining sites and boomtowns. For the most part these latter views are undated, although he produced at least one photograph of Virginia City on the Fourth of July, 1862.<sup>38</sup>

Weed returned from Nevada by the fall of the year to participate in the California State Fair, where he received a prize for his landscape photographs. Although he continued operating the San Francisco gallery, an unknown illness reportedly resulted in the sale of the gallery to the large San Francisco photographic firm of Bradley & Rulofson in 1863.<sup>39</sup> One wonders, however, if the gallery might have been sold because of financial and administrative vicissitudes rather than sickness.

Freed from responsibilities for the San Francisco gallery, Weed again disappeared from the public eye. Circumstantial evidence suggests that during 1864 he was engaged by the stereo publishing firm of Lawrence & Houseworth which produced hundreds of stereoscopic views of California, including a large group taken in the Sierra Nevada and Yosemite regions.<sup>40</sup> While Weed's authorship of these prints cannot be pinpointed, it seems certain that he led or joined the parent photographic excursion.

Presumably, Weed's association with Lawrence & Houseworth began shortly after he sold his gallery and continued into the 1870s. In fact, Weed's stereographs of the Sacramento flood published in 1863 are probably the first images produced by the important San Francisco-based firm. George S. Lawrence, an optician and jeweler who opened his shop in the city in 1851, and Thomas Houseworth, also an optician, officially joined together on May 15, 1855.<sup>41</sup> In the beginning, they merely published stereographs as an adjunct to being opticians and dealers in fine cutlery, but by 1864, the partners plunged into the stereo-publishing market.

Utilizing a special photographic wagon (visible in several stereographic images), Lawrence & Houseworth's photographing expedition traveled for many months in 1864 and covered a large geographic area. One stereo-

graph from this trip, *Photographing in the Sierra Nevada Mountains*, shows a party of four men, perhaps including the photographer and the photographer's portable dark-room tent. Judging from the number of views produced and the size of the party, the expedition probably included more than one photographer. Possibly Weed worked with one or more well-trained assistants.<sup>42</sup>

The seriousness of the Lawrence & Houseworth stereo-publishing enterprise is hinted at in the preface to the firm's catalog which noted: "Views of every description of Mining, of Cities, Streets, Public Buildings, and most of the points of interest in our California Scenery. . . ." Unhampered by parochial vision, the firm proceeded to assert: "Having a House in New York, under the charge of a partner resident there and in Europe, and our stock being large and well selected, and imported direct from European and Eastern Manufacturers, we know that we can offer special inducements, both as regards quality and price, to the Trade and the General Public."<sup>43</sup>

Perhaps the best evidence supporting Weed's presence on Lawrence & Houseworth's 1864 excursion is the existence of thirty mammoth-plate views of Yosemite made from 17" x 22" glass-plate negatives produced in the summer of 1864.<sup>44</sup> In fact, Lawrence & Houseworth stereograph no. 262, *Three Brothers—Yosemite Valley*, clearly shows Weed's mammoth-plate camera. One of Weed's large views was made from this same vantage point, and many other stereographs from the excursion are similar to mammoth plates known to be by Weed.

From the mammoth-plate negative, finished prints were mounted on 22" x 28" mounts and displayed in the windows of the Lawrence & Houseworth store at 317 and 319 Montgomery Street. They were offered for sale to the public at \$3 each, or \$4 each in a "Fine Black

Walnut Frame." Hand-colored stereoscopic views went at \$6 per dozen, uncolored ones at \$4.50 per dozen.<sup>45</sup> The gallery also sold *carte-de-visite*-sized "Album Views" made by mounting one of the stereograph's two images on a card.

Unlike Watkins, who received immediate praise for his early mammoth-plate views of Yosemite, Weed waited almost three years before his efforts in Yosemite received their deserved acclaim. In 1867, Lawrence & Houseworth sent a sizeable group of photographs to the Paris International Exposition, including "26 large views of Yo-Semite and 'the Big Trees' [by Weed], 341 stereoscopic views, viz: 21 of Yo-Semite, 33 of Mammoth Trees, 40 of San Francisco, 17 of Hydraulic Mining, and 43 of Placer Mining; also, 158 of scenery of various parts of California, and 29 of scenery in Nevada. . . ." According to the *San Francisco Bulletin*, the pictures were "recognized by the bronze medal, the highest award made for photographic views."<sup>46</sup>

Both the foreign and domestic press responded enthusiastically to the exhibit. The *Illustrated London News*, for example, marveled at the rich and unspoiled aspects of the scenes: "In none of these pictures do we see the least signs of man; not a log hut nor an axe-felled tree to indicate his presence; all seems wild, primitive."<sup>47</sup>

Although Weed had produced the mammoth-plate photographs which represented California at the Paris Exhibition, nowhere is he mentioned as the artist. Certainly he was nevertheless pleased with the artistic success of the showing. Echoing a sentiment expressed by every commentator on the photography section at the exhibition, the *San Francisco Alta* observed that the views were works of art "beyond praise."<sup>48</sup>

Equally typical is the *Alta*'s confusion of the authorship of the photographs. Erroneously attributing thirty mammoth-plate scenes of California to Carleton Watkins, the *Alta* corrected itself two days later by noting: "Our report of the proceedings of the Paris Exhibition Committee meeting on Saturday last contained an error,



*Weed's darkroom tent stands next to the Lawrence & Houseworth photography wagon in this 1864 scene taken in the Sierra Nevada. Weed made his mammoth-plate views of Yosemite on this trip.*



*Thirty inches tall, Weed's mammoth-plate camera rests on a bench in Yosemite in 1864.*





Weed's 1864 mammoth-plate view of Mirror Lake was among several of his Yosemite images that won medals for landscape photography at the 1867 Paris International Exposition. Publishers Lawrence & Houseworth submitted the views to the show.

Stereograph publisher Houseworth stands at the right in the doorway of his shop at 317-319 Montgomery Street in 1864. Many of Weed's mammoth plates of Yosemite are displayed in the windows. Houseworth, who became sole owner in 1867, published and managed Weed's work when the photographer was in Hawaii and China. Next door is the studio of another pioneer photographer, Jacob Shew.



arising from a misunderstanding in regard to views of California scenery to be sent to Paris by Lawrence & Houseworth. The large views are not by Watkins as stated, but by C. L. Weed."<sup>49</sup>

No doubt Lawrence and Houseworth, like Robert Vance before them, recognized the quality of Weed's photographic views of the California landscape and the diligence of the artist. A photographer's photographer, Weed nevertheless remained an employee or unheralded associate who worked "behind the scenes" rather than in the public eye.<sup>50</sup> Unfortunately, this self-effacing trait has made it difficult to establish the full extent of Weed's pictorial legacy.

Certainly the enormous success of Lawrence & Houseworth's photographic publishing venture is in part a tribute to Weed himself. For instance, the 1867 Paris exhibition medallion immediately appeared on the verso of the firm's stereographs as a symbol of excellence at the same time the firm doubled and redoubled its efforts in the marketplace. Of course, the success of the stereographs may have been a foregone conclusion if, as Houseworth's catalog claimed, people believed that "a stranger in one evening, with a good stereoscope, can form a better idea of California scenery than they could by a month's travel through the State."<sup>51</sup>

Despite Weed's low public profile, his Yosemite views also garnered a fair measure of local comment in San Francisco. As early as October, 1864, the *San Francisco Alta* commented favorably on his landscape efforts under the bold heading, "The Perfection of Photography: We noticed at Lawrence & Houseworth's . . . a mammoth photograph of 'Mirror Lake.' in the great Yosemite Valley, which appears to be about the acme of perfection in that beautiful art. So perfectly are the mountains in the background, and even small shrubs and vines, reflected in the pure waters of the lake, that the picture is almost equally perfect whether one side or the other be placed uppermost."<sup>52</sup>

Ever restless, however, Weed once again declined to

savor his accomplishments, and by the end of February, 1865, the peripatetic photographer booked passage on the barque *Smyrniote* bound for Hawaii.<sup>53</sup> Again, mystery surrounds this sudden move from the security of his association with Lawrence & Houseworth and his venture into yet another alliance.

Perhaps Weed was attracted to Hawaii by his brother who lived in Honolulu, or perhaps he wanted to be the first to photograph the much heralded scenic wonders of the islands. On the mainland, the Civil War had created an increased demand for Hawaiian sugar, and as a result money flowed freely on the island. No doubt Weed hoped to gain the patronage of the owners of the new sugar plantations, as well as the favor of the Hawaiian monarchy.

Fresh from a photographic sojourn into Yosemite Valley, Weed arrived in the Hawaiian Islands in March, 1865, accompanied by his brother James and a sister.<sup>54</sup> Joining another brother, Fredrick Maltby Weed, who lived in Honolulu, they formed the Weed Brothers' gallery in Honolulu. The roles of James, Fredrick, and Miss Weed are uncertain; surely Charles would have been principally responsible for the work produced by the gallery.

Aside from newspaper accounts, the only record of Weed's work in Hawaii is found in an 1893 exhibit catalog from Honolulu's Bishop Museum.<sup>55</sup> This catalog credits Weed with five mammoth portraits and one view of Honolulu, photographs which were exhibited in the museum in that year. Housed there today are Weed's only known Hawaiian landscapes and portraits: nineteen mammoth views, eight mammoth portraits, thirteen stereo views, six *carte-de-visite* views, and many *carte-de-visite* portraits. Most have been overlooked because the reticent Weed did not sign or identify his photographs.

*Princess Ruth Keelikalani sat for this Weed Brothers' tintype in 1865. The non-reversing tintype camera shows Weed's standard books-and-tablecloth props at the left.*



Weed's Hawaiian career began in April, 1865, when the Weed Brothers opened their photographic gallery on Fort Street, Honolulu's main street. Heralding the opening, the newspaper noted that Weed "put up a building expressly for the purpose. Having brought with him all the fixtures for such an establishment, he is able, in an incredibly short time, to commence work." Continuing, the paper commented that "his large photographic views of Yosemite Valley show what he has done elsewhere, and should he be equally successful in Honolulu and other parts of the islands, his establishment will be liberally patronized by the public." Taking note that Weed's gallery was open for business, the paper reported that Weed was "about to take a large photographic view of Honolulu."<sup>56</sup>

Following Weed's work with great interest, local papers reported in May that "Weed's photographic establishment is turning out some specimens of the very largest sized portraits, almost equal to the copperplate [engraving]. The small-sized are struck-off 'four at a pop.'"<sup>57</sup> Most distinctive about Weed's studio portraits were their large size (approximately 16" x 20") and their superb printing quality. His poses and studio accouterments seldom varied, and most of his subjects looked straight into the camera. Usually completing the portraits are a small, familiarly draped table with two books stacked at the left, a hanging curtain in the background, and a plaid floor covering.

From the chatter in the Honolulu papers, it seems Weed's mammoth-sized portraits proved a popular



novelty. What the photographer lacked in studio flair was apparently compensated for by the uniqueness and quality of the prints. "The Photographic Art, as now managed by Mr. Weed," observed one reporter, "is certainly producing some surprising results. It is perfectly wonderful to see the perfection and size of some of his portraits. We supposed there must be some limit to the size of views, but at present it does not seem to be attained."<sup>58</sup>

An outdoorsman, Weed also turned his attention to the Hawaiian landscape, and the Bishop Museum's collection of Weed prints includes three mammoth views of Honolulu taken from the city's prison. Placed side by side, these views form a panorama of the city. Complimenting it is another view of the city taken from the rim of Punchbowl Crater and nearly identical stereo and *carte-de-visite* views. Although Hawaiian newspaper accounts and advertisements never mentioned that Weed produced stereo views, this omission may result from unfamiliarity with the day's common photographic terms. If any distinction was made, the phrases "very largest sized portraits" and "large photographic views" described mammoth-sized works and "small-sized" indicated *carte-de-visite* images.<sup>59</sup>

Never a man to stay long in one place, Weed closed the new gallery for the month of July in order to visit the island of Maui where he made his sole effort to photograph "other parts of the islands."<sup>60</sup> Some months later a Honolulu paper noted: "At the photographic gallery of the Brothers Weed can be seen some fine views of sugar estates and scenery on Maui, including the famous crater of Haleakala, of which they have three views." Continuing, the newspaper expressed regrets that "on account of the difficulty experienced in packing their apparatus about the island, they have concluded not to visit the other islands of the group."<sup>61</sup>

Eight of Weed's mammoth views of Maui are held by the Bishop Museum, four of which show Christopher H. Lewers' plantation and residence at Waihee. Doubt-

less, Weed was drawn to this plantation because it was typical of Hawaii's newly developing sugar operations. As glowingly described by a correspondent to a Honolulu paper, the Lewers plantation photographed by Weed was surrounded by emerald green hills which grew "tiresome to the eye [until] the white chimney and long, neat factory-looking building of the Waihee mill break upon the sight. The white abutments which sustain the suspension flume, and the general arrangement of the building, give evidence of no small architectural and engineering skill in their plan and construction."<sup>62</sup>

Weed's contemporaries who went sightseeing in the Hawaiian Islands frequently commented on the hardships they encountered, especially in trying to view the spectacular Haleakala Crater. Mark Twain, for example, complained in 1866 that "we climbed a thousand feet up the side of this isolated colossus one afternoon; then camped and the next day climbed the remaining nine thousand feet and anchored on the summit, where we built a fire and froze and roasted by turns all night."<sup>63</sup> Before Weed succeeded in making a mammoth-plate view of the scenic wonder, no photographer had ventured the strenuous expedition described by Twain. Up the volcanic slope, pack animals had to haul Weed's photographic apparatus, including the mammoth view camera, a *carte-de-visite* camera, possibly a stereo camera, at least three glass plates approximately 17" x 21", glass plates for the other cameras, and a portable darkroom with all the chemicals necessary to coat and process the wet-plate negatives. Because the crater had no water source, animals also had to carry water for the processing of the plates. In addition, the thinness of the atmosphere at 10,000 feet would make it difficult to set up the equipment and prepare the plates. Finally, the party probably had only a limited time to photograph the crater before



the warming day brought in the ever-present obscuring clouds.

Not surprisingly, then, Weed's mammoth views of Haleakala Crater created a noticeable stir in Honolulu. Reported one paper: "Magnifique, excellent, pretty fair! On beholding Weed's large photographic views of scenery on Maui and of Honolulu, we involuntarily exclaimed in the above language of the Frenchman, whose astonishment on a certain occasion well-nigh overcame him. The age of wonders and art has not passed away. Knowing the difficulties attending the ascent of Haleakala, we are more than astonished to learn that he succeeded so well in taking views of the largest crater in the world."<sup>64</sup>

Shortly after Charles' return to Honolulu, the Weeds

suddenly decided to leave for Hong Kong. "During their stay here," observed one newspaper, "they have taken some very choice views of Sandwich Island scenery and sugar mills, as well as views of Honolulu, and houses and streets in the city. We have never before been favored with so skillful scenic artists as these gentlemen, and to our brethren of the press in China, Manila, or wherever else they may go, we commend them, in the words of a practical photographer in San Francisco, as the 'most worthy and skillful artists in the Pacific if not the world.' The collection of views which they will gather in their tour around the world, must be one of the most valuable ever made, and we trust they will receive an ample reward for their labor."<sup>65</sup>

Although Charles Weed remained in the Hawaiian

Weed produced at least three mammoth-plate views of Maui's Haleakala Crater. To make the large-size wet plates, he carried water and sheets of glass up the volcanic crater.

Islands for only nine months, his gallery was reportedly "liberally patronized by the public."<sup>66</sup> Weed, however, was unsatisfied simply with the financial success of the Honolulu gallery. Newspaper accounts suggest that he planned to photograph the scenic wonders of the islands but was discouraged by the difficulties experienced on Maui. If circumstances had been more favorable, perhaps he would have extended his stay in order to photograph the undocumented landscape around him.

On December 9, 1865, Charles, his brother James, and Miss Weed left Honolulu aboard the *Fairlight* for Hong Kong.<sup>67</sup> From Hawaii, they headed to an even more exotic site, described in a contemporary account thusly: "[Hong Kong] is built of white granite, laid out in regular streets, which rise in terraces one above the other. . . . The harbor is full of shipping—merchant vessels of all nations . . . French, English, American, and Russian men-of-war. Between these glide all day long, boats of all patterns, junks, and sampans. . . . A pull of five or ten minutes brings the traveller to the stone quay, and as he mounts one of the numerous flagged stairs along its face, he finds himself surrounded by eager coolies or porters, and chair-men."<sup>68</sup>

On January 26, 1866, the *Daily Press* announced the party's safe arrival in Hong Kong, provocatively remarking that "Mr. Weed, to begin work in the colony as a photographer, was here some years ago." By March, the dauntless Weed Brothers had opened a photographic establishment "opposite the *Daily Press* office."<sup>69</sup>

Unfortunately, the precise nature of the Weeds' business activities, the length of their stay, and the ultimate success of their venture is obscure at best. Nor is there any indication which proves or disproves that they had continued on their "tour around the world." *The Chronicle and Directory for China* . . . reported their pres-

ence in Hong Kong from 1866 to 1867. However, no further mention appears until 1872, when the *China Directory* listed merely: "Fisler, L.F., Successor to C.L. Weed photographic artist, Canton Road."<sup>70</sup>

What transpired in the intervening years is only conjecture. The 1869 catalog of the San Francisco-based Thomas Houseworth & Co., for instance, advertised "large" and "mammoth-plate" views of China and Japan, including "the most noted Buildings, Temples, Bronze Images, Harbor and River views, Burying Grounds, and Panoramic views of the principal Cities, Pagodas, etc."<sup>71</sup> Also included in the listing were 153 stereographs of similar subjects. Weed may have been responsible for these images.

Another speculation is that Weed may have traveled to the Paris Exposition in 1867 and worked in Europe. This idea has some support in a news article in the *Red Bluff Sentinel* of November 5, 1870, perhaps the first public mention of his return to California, which reads: "Mr. C. L. Weed, is now engaged fitting up rooms in the Old Luna House. . . . Mr. Weed is a No. 1 artist, has been engaged in the Photographic business for the last twenty years, is said to be one of the finest artists on the Pacific Coast. He has practiced his profession in many of the principal cities of Europe for the last ten years with good success."<sup>72</sup>

By March, 1871, Weed had moved from the Luna House location to "new quarters in the rear of Chase and Brothers Paint Shop, near Crandall's Harness Establishment."<sup>73</sup> A little over a month later—in a business turn-over rapid even for the times—the firm had passed into the hands of photographer Fred Taylor, and Weed returned to his old haunts in San Francisco.<sup>74</sup>

Nearing fifty years of age and perhaps tiring of setting up his own studio once again, Weed now allied himself with a succession of photographic publishers: Thomas Houseworth & Co. in 1871–72; Bradley & Rulofson in 1872–74; Silas Selleck in 1875; and Charles Lake Cramer in 1875–78.<sup>75</sup> In each instance, little evidence exists to



# PHOTOGRAPHY.



## C. L. WEED,

Would announce to the citizens of Red Bluff and vicinity that he has fitted up rooms in the Old Luna House, where he is prepared to supply those wishing them, with all the latest styles of Photographs.

Late improvements enable him to operate without regard to the weather.

Red Bluff, November 12, 1870.

explain his precise link with these establishments. Exactly concurrent with Weed's involvement with both Houseworth and Bradley & Rulofson, however, the firms produced particularly large numbers of landscape photographs.

Muybridge scholar Robert Haas tells us that Muybridge was affiliated with Thomas Houseworth from 1871 to 1872, the years of Weed's association with the same firm. Moreover, Haas reports that by May, 1872, Muybridge (in connection with Houseworth) issued a prospectus announcing plans for a mammoth-plate series on Yosemite "with an aim at the highest artistic treatment the subject affords." When Muybridge returned from his expedition to Yosemite, however, he immediately repudiated his prior arrangements with Houseworth and joined Bradley & Rulofson. This happened at exactly the same time Charles Weed moved to Bradley & Rulofson.<sup>76</sup>

*Weed's mammoth plate of a sugar plantation and processing plant at "Wailuku Valley" was cropped and fastened on a mount. These views provided much-needed income to the landscape photographer.*

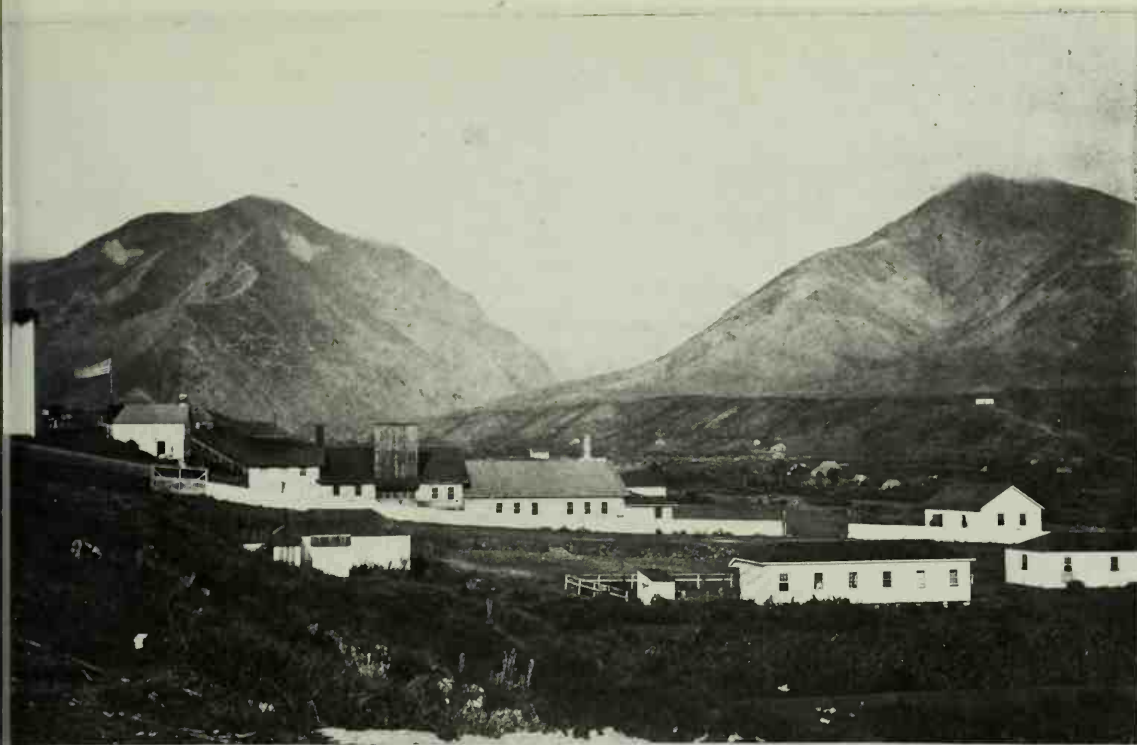
*Studio portraits brought Weed income after he returned to California in 1870. The Red Bluff Sentinel carried this business announcement for Weed.*

The resulting implication that Weed accompanied Muybridge to Yosemite in 1872 is very strong. It would, of course, have been an ideal arrangement, since Weed had experience producing large plates in Yosemite. Even more important for a possible Weed-Muybridge association is Weed's long record of working as a team member and of eschewing personal glorification. For Muybridge's large ego, this willingness to defer credit would have been very important.

Further evidence of the presumed association of Weed and Muybridge appears in an album published by Coyne & Relyea in 1874. Entitled *Sun Pictures of the Yo-Semite Valley, Cal.*, the work is composed of forty-four views of Yosemite and the Big Trees Grove signed by Thomas Houseworth & Co. It is certain that these mounted photographs were printed from negatives copied from Weed's 1864 mammoth-plate views and from others which have all the earmarks of Muybridge's work.<sup>77</sup> The latter negatives may have been obtained from Muybridge's 1872 excursion as partial payment for Houseworth's initial financial support of the project.

The *Sun Pictures* album appears to be the final exposure given Weed's Yosemite views. Many of his stereographs of California scenery, however, were published in years to come. As for Weed himself, by 1880 he had become a photoengraver, an occupation which he followed well into the 1890s.<sup>78</sup> During this period he lived quietly with his wife, Sarah P. Weed, whom he had married in the mid-1870s.<sup>79</sup> He died without fanfare on August 31, 1903, in Oakland, at age seventy-nine.<sup>80</sup>

Charles Leander Weed's last years were unusually quiet for a man whose life had been so full of adventure and whose works had helped established landscape photography in California. Weed's pictorial efforts set precedents of very high tradition, yet those who owed him the greatest debt praised him the least. Even more disconcerting are recent observers who, failing to understand his influence, describe his landscape efforts as provincial and visually naive. Additional study, however, will show



SUGAR PLANTATION & WORKS.  
(Napa Valley, N.H.)

that Weed deserves a place in the first rank of nineteenth-century western photographers. Perhaps the finest eulogy to Weed's accomplishments in landscape photography is found in the following words of Ansel Adams, dean of Yosemite's twentieth-century photographers: "The orientation of his pictures indicates careful thought and selection of view-point; there is nothing casual or haphazard in his compositions. His selection of field and spacing of forms and areas are efficient and powerful. . . . Photographers of today will surely benefit by study and critical evaluation of these excellent images. They will observe the clarity of line and edge, the simple arrangement of mass, the beauty and richness of tonal values. Above all, they will respond to the integrity and forthright simplicity of [Weed's] photography and to his devotion to the enduring qualities of the world around him."<sup>81</sup>

The illustrations on pages 197, 198, 201, 202 and 203 are courtesy the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; on pages

194-5, courtesy Nevada Historical Society, Reno; on page 205, courtesy Robert A. Weinstein; on page 206 (top), courtesy Lou Smaus; on page 210 (top), courtesy New York Public Library; on page 209 (bottom), courtesy California State Library; on page 209 (top), Society of California Pioneers; on page 210 (bottom), Paul T. Shafer; on pages 212, 214, and 217, courtesy The Bishop Museum, Honolulu, Hawaii. The photograph on page 206 (bottom) is reproduced from Clark Worswick, *Imperial China* (New York, 1978).

### Notes

1. Peter T. Conmy, City Historian, City of Oakland, to author, April 16, 1979.
2. *Sacramento Union*, December 25, 1854.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, February 25, 1858. For a study of the career of William Shew, see Wendy Cunkle Calmenson, "William Shew, Pioneer Daguerreotypist," *California Historical Quarterly*, 56:2-19. For references to Vance, see the special Fall, 1978, issue of *California History* focusing on Carleton Watkins, especially the

- articles by Pauline Grenbeaux on Watkins' early career and by Nanette Sexton on Watkins' early style and technique.
5. *Sacramento City Directory*, 1859.
  6. *Sacramento Union*, December 25, 1854.
  7. During 1858, Vance used the collodion wet-plate procedure to make copies of forged documents in the Limantour land fraud case. In the process, a glass negative was contact-printed by sunlight on paper that had been "salted" in a solution of sodium chloride, sensitized in a bath of silver nitrate, and dried. Salt prints lack the surface luster of albumen printing papers.
  8. *San Francisco Alta California*, October 1, 1855.
  9. G. R. Fardon, *San Francisco Album: Photographs of the Most Beautiful Views and Public Buildings of San Francisco* (San Francisco: Herre & Bauer, 1856).
  10. Mary V. and A. W. Hood, *The Middle Fork of the American River, Then and Now, 1858-1958* (unpublished manuscript held by the Yosemite National Park Museum, n.d.). This document contains an important and sensitive assessment of the origin and circumstances surrounding the production of Weed's American River Panorama in 1858.
  11. Hutchings, of course, knew the value of photographs as sources for illustrations. His *Miner's Own Book* contains an engraving based on an "ambrotype by Woods & Michaels." He also utilized a daguerreotype by W. Salmon and an ambrotype by McKown & Bishop in early issues of *Hutchings' California Magazine*.
  12. *San Francisco Times*, *San Francisco Alta*, and *Sacramento Bee*, November 2, 1858.
  13. Edward Vischer, "A Trip to the Mining Regions in the Spring of 1859," *California Historical Quarterly*, 11 (September, 1932): p. 229.
  14. Mary V. Hood, "Charles L. Weed, Yosemite's First Photographer," *Yosemite Nature Notes*, 38 (June, 1959): p. 86.
  15. Bill and Mary Hood, "Yosemite's First Photographers," *Yosemite: Saga of a Century, 1864-1964* (Oakhurst, Ca.: Sierra Star Press, 1964), p. 49.
  16. Carl Parcher Russell, *One Hundred Years in Yosemite: The Story of a Great Park and Its Friends* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), p. 56.
  17. Hood, "Weed," p. 83. It is uncertain whether this image is taken from a large negative or a stereograph, however. The latter seems more likely, according to Eldon Gruppe.
  18. Emil Ernst, "Yosemite's First Tourists," *Yosemite Nature Notes*, 34 (June, 1955): p. 77.
  19. Hood, "Weed," p. 82.
  20. *San Francisco Times*, August 19, 1859.
  21. *Ibid.*, September 15, 1859.
  22. *Hutchings' California Magazine*, October, November, December, 1859 and March, 1860.
  23. Hood, "Weed," p. 80.
  24. Hutchings continued to use many of these illustrations in his *Scenes of Wonder and Curiosity in California* (1861, 1862, 1870, and 1876). They also appear in *In the Heart of the Sierras* (1886).
  25. *Hutchings' California Magazine*, March, 1860.
  26. Edith M. Coulter and Jeanne Van Nostrand, editors, *A Camera in the Gold Rush* (San Francisco: Book Club of California, 1946). "A series of Photographs of Pacific Coast Towns, Camps, and Mining Operations of Pioneer Days."
  27. From an advertising broadside c.1859 for "Vance's First Premium Gallery" held by the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.
  28. William C. Darrah, *The World of Stereographs* (Gettysburg: Published by the author, 1977), pp. 21-24.
  29. The Edward Anthony catalogue of May, 1860, per information provided by A. Verner Conover, lists a total of seventy-eight titles of California stereographs. Numbers one through forty-one are from Yosemite and environs.
  30. *Sacramento Union*, December 22, 1858.
  31. *Ibid.*
  32. *China Mail*, October 3, 1860.
  33. *China Directory*, 1862.
  34. *San Francisco Business Directory and Mercantile Guide for 1864-65*, p. 267.
  35. In a letter to Beaumont Newhall (dated May 3, 1957, and held by the International Museum of Photography, Rochester, New York), Mary Hood assesses the early Vance-Weed images: "I believe (that we have reconstructed) three of the famous Vance Panoramas. . . . A. The American River Panorama taken in the fall (probably October, 1858). B. The Yosemite Panorama which we know was taken between June 18 and July 2, 1859. C. The Gold Canyon Panorama (Nevada) taken in early summer about 1862 or thereabouts."
  36. Coulter and Van Nostrand, *A Camera in the Gold Rush*. All of the original Weed prints held by Stanford University are currently missing.
  37. *Sacramento Bee*, January 30, 1862.
  38. Coulter and Van Nostrand, *A Camera in the Gold Rush*, "Virginia City Volunteer Firemen on C Street."
  39. *San Francisco Business Directory and Mercantile Guide for 1864-65*, p. 276.
  40. The exact number of stereographs produced by Lawrence & Houseworth in 1864 is unknown. By 1866, their catalog lists more than 1000 views many of which are known to have been made in 1864. In October, 1864, Lawrence & Houseworth advertised a stereoscopic view inventory of 1025-dozen items. By April of the following year, their holdings had increased to 2500-dozen stereoscopic views.
  41. *San Francisco City Directory*, 1856.
  42. It is possible that the Sacramento-based stereophotographer A. A. Hart joined the party, or that the enigmatic W. Harris may



- have gained some of his experience on this trip. Many other possibilities also exist.
43. *Catalogue of Lawrence & Houseworth Opticians* . . . (3rd edition held by the Library of Congress, c.1866), p. 3, 4.
44. *Ibid.* p. 45. A set of thirty mammoth-plate views of Yosemite are held by the New York Public Library. Another complete set, formerly owned by the Mercantile Library, is now privately held. Further mention is made in the *Catalogue of Photographic Views* (Thomas Houseworth & Co., 5th edition, c.1869), pp. 68–70.
45. *Catalogue of Lawrence & Houseworth Opticians* . . . (3rd edition held by the Library of Congress, c.1866), pp. 44–45.
46. *San Francisco Bulletin*, June 10, 1868.
47. *Illustrated London News*, September 14, 1867.
48. *San Francisco Alta*, January 13, 1867.
49. *Ibid.*, January 15, 1867.
50. This may not have been entirely altruistic since such agreements concerning ownership and credit were often made as part of the employer–employee relationship. The precedent was set by Mathew Brady, for example, who received credit for all of the Civil War photographs taken by his employees.
51. *Catalogue of Photographic Views* (Thomas Houseworth & Co., 5th edition, c.1869), quoted on p. 6.
52. *San Francisco Alta*, October 14, 1864.
53. Hawaii State Archives Passenger Manifest Index. The *Smyrniote* arrived in Honolulu on March 4, 1865.
54. Miss T. Weed arrived in Honolulu from San Francisco with J. A. and C. L. Weed on March 4, 1865. Miss M. Weed departed for Hong Kong with James and C. L. Weed on December 9, 1865. All the information on Weed's visit in Hawaii has been compiled by Lynn Davis and Susan Shaner.
55. William T. Brigham, *A Preliminary Catalogue of Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum of Polynesian Ethnology and Natural History, Part V* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1893).
56. *The Friend*, April, 1865.
57. *Ibid.*, May, 1865.
58. *Ibid.*, June, 1865.
59. *Ibid.*, May, September, 1865.
60. *Ibid.*, April, 1865.
61. *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, September 2, 1865.
62. *Ibid.*, June 24, 1865.
63. Samuel Clemens, *Roughing It* (Hartford, Conn.: American Publishing Co., 1872).
64. *The Friend*, September, 1865.
65. *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, November 18, 1865.
66. *The Friend*, April, 1865.
67. Hawaii State Archives Passenger Manifest Index. The *Fairlight* departed for Hong Kong on December 9, 1865.
68. *The Californian*, September 1, 1865.
69. *The Daily Press* (Hong Kong), January 26, March 3, 1866.
70. *The China Directory*, 1872. This succession probably took place as early as 1870.
71. *Catalogue of Photographic Views* (Thomas Houseworth & Co., 5th edition, c.1869), p. 71–77. Even if Weed did not actually make these images, he may have been instrumental in arranging for their acquisition by Houseworth.
72. *Red Bluff Sentinel*, November 5, 1870.
73. *Ibid.*, March 11, 1871.
74. *Ibid.*, April 22, 1871.
75. *San Francisco City Directory*, 1871–1878.
76. Mary V. Jessup Hood and Robert Bartlett Haas, "Eadweard Muybridge's Yosemite Valley Photographs, 1867–1872," *California Historical Quarterly* 52 (March, 1963): 14–21.
77. Eldon Gruppe suggests that the images in the *Sun* album which exhibit a significant treatment of the sky area (including cloud effects) may be attributed to Muybridge. Also included in this album is an image of Muybridge seated on a Thomas Houseworth & Co. box. Perhaps it was taken by Weed. Weed is also mentioned as an important member of the Bradley and Rulofson operation in an advertisement appearing in *Sacramento City Directory*, 1874, p. 64.
78. *Oakland City Directory*, 1880–1893. Paul T. Shafer, however, reports that a C. L. Weed was active at 120 Michigan Avenue in Detroit, Michigan, in the early 1880s. Shafer also observes that "the 'Weed' of Mayo & Weed in Chicago (c.1890–1898) may be Charles Leander Weed." The former seems possible, but the Mayo & Weed association unlikely.
79. According to her death certificate (Alameda Co. 16–033924), Sarah was born March 30, 1833, in New York and died November 19, 1916.
80. *The Oakland Tribune*, September 2, 1903.
81. Beaumont Newhall, "Gold Rush Photographer," *Image*, 1 (December, 1952): 3.

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# Bible Communism and the Origins of Orange County

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*In the early 1880s, Santa Ana's Main Street must have seemed like the frontier to the Townerite emigrants from New York State.*

Founded in central New York in 1848 by John Humphrey Noyes and a small band of Christian Perfectionists, the Oneida Community was the most radical social experiment in American history. For more than thirty harmonious and increasingly prosperous years, men, women and children growing to some 300 in numbers joined together in this communitarian venture. Then, in 1881, after several years of factionalism, the group disbanded. Although legally transformed in that year into a capitalist enterprise which became (and remains) a leading manufacturer of silverware, the Utopian Socialist community nevertheless lived on in more than its name alone. Notably, one dissident group of Oneida "Bible Communists" migrated to Southern California in the early 1880s, where they settled in what has become Orange County. Although deeply regretting the dissolution of their treasured Oneida Community, this faction of former communards resourcefully created a new life in California, prospering while remaining loyal to their radical communitarian heritage. Some became intellectual leaders, merchants, farmers, and ranchers, and many actively participated in civic affairs and in Democrat, Populist, and Socialist party politics. James W. Towner, leader of this dissident group of Oneidans called "Townerites," was appointed by the governor of California to serve as chairman of the committee that organized Orange County. He later became the county's first superior court judge.

The experiences of these Townerites on the western frontier provide a missing concluding chapter in the national legacy of nineteenth-century Utopian Socialism. As well, the community's explorations of social questions such as human sexuality, women's liberation, birth control, eugenics, childraising and child care, group therapy, nutrition, and ecology anticipate and mirror the concerns of Californians a century later.<sup>1</sup>

A look at the beliefs and practices of John Humphrey Noyes and his Oneida associates helps explain the community's impressive durability, as well as the values and

attitudes of the early immigrants to Orange County from Oneida. By the 1870s, the Oneida communards' highly unconventional approaches to social and sexual matters had attracted both admiration and intense vilification. Yet all their important practices, including Mutual Criticism, Complex Marriage, and Male Continence, were carefully rooted in Perfectionist theological doctrine as formulated by Noyes and his fellow Oneidans. The basic principles of life at the Oneida Community, in other words, had a religious base.<sup>2</sup>

Mutual Criticism, for example, was the central form of governance at Oneida. Derived from an early European procedure known as the Chapter of Faults, it had been routinely followed in Benedictine monasteries and convents, where priests and nuns adhered to St. Paul's epistles that members "admonish," "rebuke," and "reprove" one another. During Noyes' years at a seminary in Andover, Massachusetts, he had allied with a small renegade band that frankly and openly confessed to each other personal problems and inadequacies. Subsequently, Oneidans adopted "inter-personal feedback" techniques to help members attain personal growth. Psychologists Murray Levine and Barbara Benedict Bunker, who have compared this Mutual Criticism approach with modern forms of group therapy and encounter sessions, have found it to be "striking for its psychological insights and startling to those who believe that sensitivity training and group encounter are major social inventions of our own time."<sup>3</sup>

The doctrine of Complex Marriage, or pantagamy, on the other hand, was Noyes' ingenious solution to the perplexing theological problem of how to reconcile earthly

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[Oncidans] dealt forthrightly and creatively with eugenics, child care, sex education, nutrition, and ecology.

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marriage with the need to be both sinless and spiritually committed to God. Initially attracted by the idea of "spiritual affinities" rather than "carnal union" between men and women, Noyes eventually concluded that such platonic relationships were unsatisfactory. Finally in September, 1837, Noyes disclosed in a private letter to a close friend his highly original solution: "When the will of God is done on earth, as it is in heaven *there will be no marriage*. The marriage supper of the Lamb is a feast at which *every dish is free to every guest*. Exclusiveness, jealousy, quarreling have no place there. . . . In a holy community, there is no more reason why sexual intercourse should be restrained by law, than why eating and drinking should be and there is as little occasion for shame in the one case as in the other. . . ."<sup>4</sup>

Noyes' radical proposal was neither an invitation to Mormon polygamy (which Oncidans firmly rejected as oppression of women) nor a plea for either sexual anarchy as practiced by Josiah Warren's Modern Times community or free love as pursued by the communitarians of Berlin Heights, Ohio.<sup>5</sup> Instead, Noyes assumed that all "saints" were equally dedicated to the Christian faith, so that communism in sexual relations was just as logical and important as communism in economic arrangements. Furthermore, Noyes and the Oneida Community believed that selfishness, the outside world's major sin, was inherent in two basic institutions: exclusive marriage, which made women slaves, and private ownership of wealth, which rewarded greed and acquisitiveness. Both, they believed, must be abolished in order that men and women might again enjoy full communion with God and social justice and harmony. Abhorring "romantic

love" as the basis for selecting a mate, Noyes once remarked, "Falling in love is a kind of fatality."<sup>6</sup>

In order to reconcile earthly marriage with spiritual devotion to God and with liberation of women from marital bondage—as well as to overcome what Noyes viewed as the emotional isolation and social atomization of the nuclear family—Noyes joined with other like-minded persons in the 1840s to build an ideal community of Bible Communists. To implement their beliefs, they made sexual communism, called Complex Marriage (or the marriage of every man to every woman and vice versa) the foundation of their social system. In this way, the Oneida Community became perhaps the only nineteenth-century utopian colony to combine communism in economics with communism in sex.

Because Oncidans wished to free women from unwanted children and regulate the size of their community, they sought to practice some form of birth control. In the absence of effective contraceptives, Noyes invented the method of Male Continence, or "coitus reservatus," whereby the men assumed responsibility for withholding ejaculation. By this means, Oncidans distinguished "amative" and "procreative" intercourse. This moved physical love into the life of the spirit and freed women from onerous duties to their husbands, thereby enabling both parties to enjoy rather than fear sexual relations. The effectiveness of the Oncidans' practice of Male Continence is evidenced by the birth of only two children per year to some forty couples of reproductive age.<sup>7</sup>

Few areas of social concern escaped the attention of the Oneida Community. Its members dealt equally forthrightly and creatively with eugenics (or "stirpiculture," as they called it), child-care, parent-child relations, sex education, nutrition and dietetic problems, the relationship between mind and body, and ecology.<sup>8</sup>

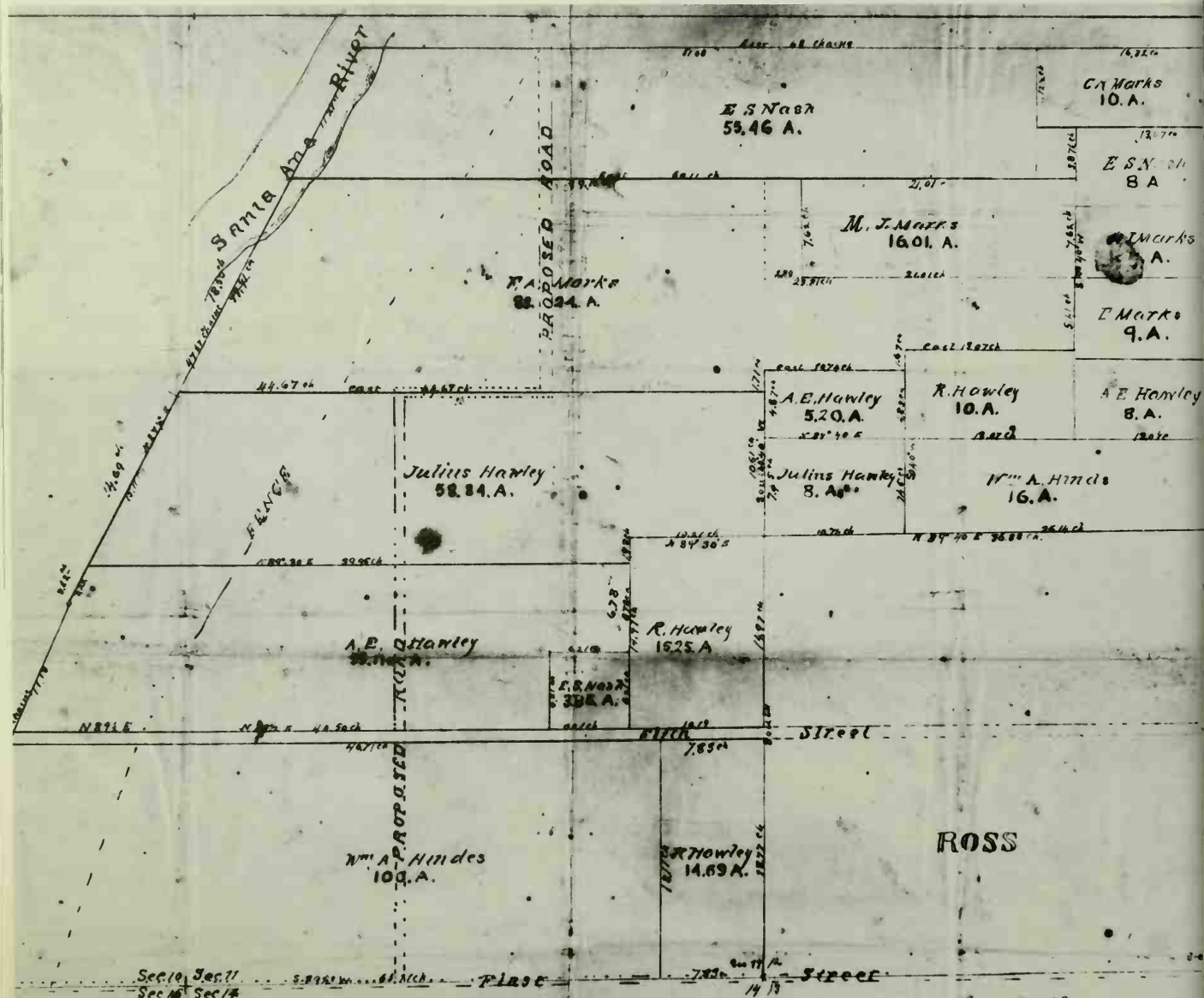
Guided by these principles for more than three decades, the Oneida Community grew to approximately 300 men, women, and children. Despite public criticism for



*Founder of the Oneida Community in 1848, John Humphrey Noyes was its principal leader until his self-imposed exile to Canada in 1879. Descendants of the original Bible Communists and current employees of Oneida Silversmiths live in the New York Mansion House which was constructed in the 1860s and enlarged in subsequent years.*



This Santa Ana plat map demonstrates the contiguous landholdings of the former Oneida Communalists.



**PLAT**  
 Showing Subdivisions of Ross Tract  
 of the Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana

Surveyed by

HECKELD

Scale 5 chains to one inch



its radical practices, the community prospered financially from commercial forays into trap-making, silk-producing, canning, and in its later years, silver-manufacturing. By the 1870s, however, factionalism and open strife began plaguing the community's seeming unshakable social harmony. What went awry?

Many observers have found the reasons for the Oneida Community's demise in external causes—"public pressure"<sup>9</sup> or "external opposition."<sup>10</sup> The author of one of the most detailed studies of the Oneida Community, Robert Allerton Parker, however, flatly contradicts these analyses with the assertion that "the real defeat came not from outside opposition, but through dissension among Noyes' followers."<sup>11</sup> Two other leading accounts—one by Constance Noyes Robertson (Noyes' granddaughter), and the other by Maren Lockwood Carden—also stress internal factors, including the steady deterioration of Noyes' physical condition; the inability of Noyes' son to serve as an effective leader; disagreements regarding the community's controversial practices of Mutual Criticism, Complex Marriage, and Male Continence; and the rancorous division between supporters of Noyes (the "Noyesites") and those who in the late-1870s increasingly protested his authority (the "Townerites" who eventually migrated to Orange County).<sup>12</sup>

Internal factors clearly held greater significance, although the threat of external reprisals became crucial when Noyes was driven into Canadian exile in June, 1879, to escape charges of statutory rape and adultery. Most relevant here is the internal challenge to Noyes' authority posed by the group that came to be called "Townerites." This dissident faction gathered around two men in particular: William A. Hinds, who had been a community founder and who became president of Oneida Community, Ltd., in 1904, and James W. Towner, the minister, abolitionist, lawyer, judge, Civil War captain, and decorated hero who with a small group joined Oneida as former members of the Berlin Heights Free Love Community. Although the earnest and per-

sistent Towner clan had been denied admission to the Oneida Community for eight years on the grounds of alleged incompatibility between the sexual anarchists of the Berlin Heights variety and the Bible Communists,<sup>14</sup> in 1874 they convinced Noyes and his associates of their commitment to the principles of Bible Communism and were granted membership in the Oneida Community.<sup>15</sup>

Suffice it to say that a dispute eventually developed between the Noyesites and the Townerites and that two additional factors help explain the ultimate dissolution of the community. First of all, the Townerites' sexually libertarian and politically democratic proclivities, an indelible legacy of the earlier free love experiences in Berlin Heights in the 1860s, came into conflict with the spiritually hierarchical principles of Oneida. Secondly, Noyes' persistent reliance on the "rule of grace" and his stern rejection of the "rule of law" alienated the more legally-minded Towner group from the rest of the Oneida communards.<sup>16</sup>

The deliberate and painful decisions to terminate the Oneida Community and form a joint-stock capitalist corporation were reached in 1879 and 1880. Following a bitter transition period from communal to capitalist organization and, at least in terms of public pronouncement, from pantagamy or Complex Marriage to monogamy, several contingents of Townerites departed Oneida for Southern California in 1881 and 1882. They settled in the small frontier town of Santa Ana which had a population of approximately 1,200 people, and in subsequent years they were augmented by other Oneidans and by the birth of several children. By 1890, nearly 40 former Oneida Bible Communists and their children (or nearly fifteen percent of the community at the time of its dissolution) lived in what had become a rapidly growing agricultural and commercial center.<sup>17</sup>

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*Prior to their departure from New York, the Townerites had carefully formulated a plan for acquiring land in California.*

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The role played by these Townerites in the settlement and development of Orange County is obscured by the lack of written remnants and by the reticence of most descendants to discuss family matters. We do not know, for example, the extent to which the social and sexual practices of the Oneida Community were continued by the Townerites in Santa Ana. Nor do we know the extent to which the principles of Bible Communism guided their activities or helped maintain a community life in the West. It seems unlikely that the Townerites would have completely abandoned the social and sexual behavior they practiced so long at Berlin Heights and at Oneida. Highly principled, not frivolous, people, they were well accustomed to criticism from "conventional" society. Towner, in particular, had adamantly argued during the final months of the Oneida Community that Complex Marriage should be continued even in the face of virulent public attacks.<sup>18</sup>

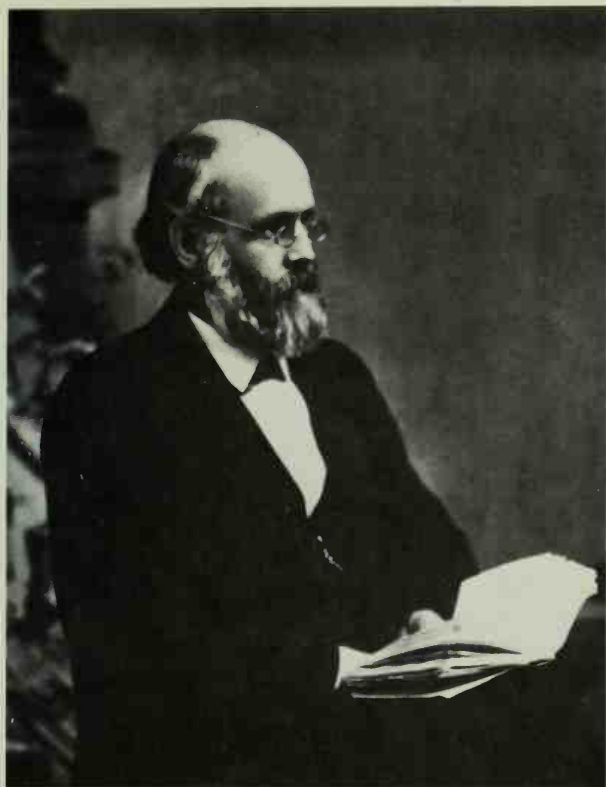
Nevertheless, these practices, even if continued in Santa Ana, were never publically espoused. By this time, the national "purity crusade" against the polygamy of Mormonism and the sexual associationism of the Oneida Community had gained full momentum. As social historian David Pivar has noted, in the 1870s and 1880s "a tumultuous debate [raged] about sex, marriage, morals, and divorce in America. Oneida had become a symbol of free love and, hence, a threat to social organization. . . ."<sup>19</sup> Under such circumstances, the Townerites would have been foolish to flaunt their deviant ways at the same time that they were trying to integrate themselves in a new environment. On June 9, 1882, an editorial in the Santa

*Ana Weekly Standard* suggests that their caution was appropriate. Referring to certain new "anti-religious" elements in the community, an editorial writer commented: "It is difficult to figure this thing out—whether it is another 'Oneida Community' business or a 'Mormon outfit.' At any rate it will be a good idea for parents to keep their eyes on their daughters and husbands on their weak wives. . . ."<sup>20</sup>

Whatever their sexual practices in Orange County, evidence suggests the Oneida dissidents persisted in functioning as a group in Santa Ana. Particularly important factors were their extensive intermarriage among Townerites, the continuing social and commercial interaction, the correspondence and visits with people who remained at Oneida, and, significantly, the practice of contiguous landholding in Santa Ana.

Prior to their departure from New York, the Townerites had carefully formulated a plan for acquiring land in California. Towner probably drafted the article of agreement dated September, 1881, which made Julius Hawley, Roswell B. Hawley, Alfred E. Hawley, Frederick A. Marks, Martha J. Marks, Edwin S. Nash, Charlotte S. Reid, and William A. Hinds copartners for the purpose of purchasing land. According to the plan, each copartner contributed between \$2,000 and \$2,500 for a period of three years, in order to cultivate and improve the land and to can fruits and vegetables for business and trade. Ultimately the land was to be apportioned according to the plan adopted by the Anaheim Colony, as set forth in Charles Nordhoff's *The Communitistic Societies of the United States* (1875).<sup>21</sup> No party to the agreement could sell or dispose of his land without giving the privilege of first purchase to the other parties.<sup>22</sup>

By combining their limited financial resources, as they had done for so many years, the former Oneidans were able to raise \$26,200 for purchasing a substantial block of land soon after their arrival in Santa Ana. The 458-acre Ross tract near the western boundary of the city was



*Minister, abolitionist, free-love advocate, lawyer, municipal judge, Civil War captain and hero, communalist, and superior court judge, James W. Towner (1823-1911, above, left), led the anti-Noyes faction at Oneida and moved to Santa Ana with more than thirty former communards.*



*Cinderella Sweet Towner (1829-1894, above) was the wife of James W. Towner during the "free love" years in Berlin Heights, Ohio, the "Bible Communist" years in the Oneida Community in New York, and the "respectable" years in Santa Ana.*

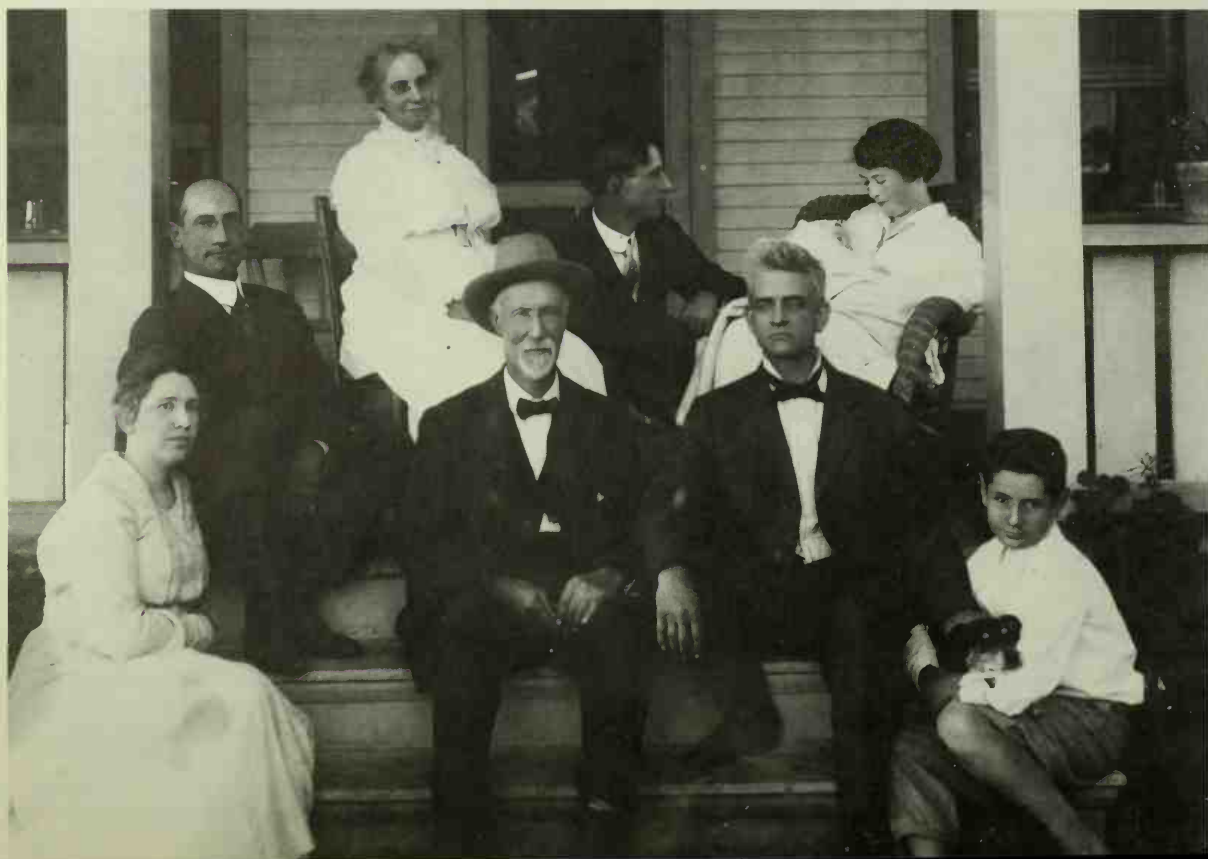
*D. Edson Smith (1839-1928) joined the Oneida Community in 1867. A leading horticulturist and intellectual, he moved to Santa Ana in 1881, where he became a prominent citrus farmer and civic activist. Ellen Frances Hutchins (Reid) Smith (1838-1922) held several positions at Oneida including superintendent of the Silk Department. She married Ransom Reid, Sr., Oneida's head mechanic. In 1881 she migrated to Santa Ana with her son Ransom Reid, Jr., and married D. Edson Smith.*





*Alfred E. and Elizabeth Mallory Hawley, married at Oneida in 1879, moved to Santa Ana in 1887. They purchased a sporting goods store from John P. Hutchins, also a former Oneida Perfectionist. Alfred became a leader of the Socialist party in Orange County and wrote a column for the Santa Ana Blade.*

*In Santa Ana the Marks family grouped for this portrait in the early twentieth century. Frederick (wearing hat) and Martha (in straight chair) were among the early Townnerites who purchased land in Santa Ana under terms of an agreement signed at Oneida in 1881. Emerson Marks (leaning against post), born in Oneida in 1877 and a leading Santa Ana attorney, was appointed superior court judge of Orange County in 1925 and to the Fourth District Appellate Court in 1929. Ernest Marks (in profile), born on the Marks' ranch in 1887, farmed it until its sale in 1943. Allan Van Velzer (petting dog), Martha's son from a previous relationship, became a physician in Gardena, California.*





*Enjoying the baseball games at Cragin Meadow in the Oneida Community, Alfred Hawley organized his own team, called Hawley's Yellow Sox, and built a baseball park in the rear of his tract of land in Santa Ana.*

purchased and then divided among the copartners. In subsequent decades it was sold, repurchased, and resold, sometimes to Townerites for a minimal amount, sometimes to "outsiders" for a handsome profit. In addition, other Oneida emigrants—including George A. Allen, John P. Hutchins, D. Edson Smith, Augusta E. Towner, and James W. Towner—purchased numerous nearby parcels of land, on a portion of which stand today's county court house and municipal buildings. The acquisition of this land provided the Townerites a strong base from which to exercise economic, social, and political power in their new community.<sup>23</sup>

Not surprisingly, the Townerites' impact upon the Santa Ana community was beyond proportion to their numbers. For example, James Towner was appointed in 1889 by the governor of California to serve as chairman of the five-person commission directing the organization of the new Orange County out of the old Los Angeles

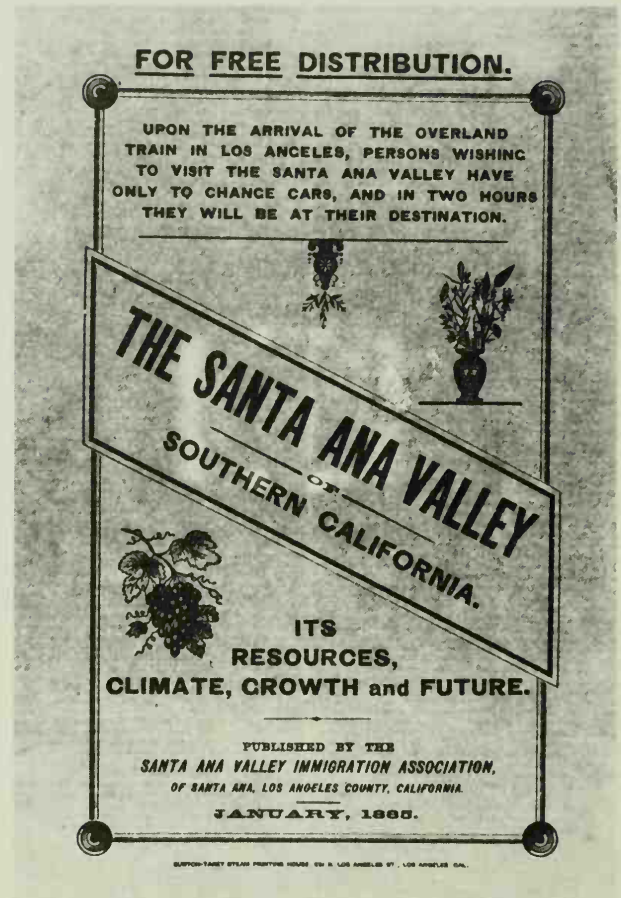
County.<sup>24</sup> In that same year, Towner was elected as the new county's first superior court judge, a position he held until 1896.<sup>25</sup> Other former Oneida colleagues actively worked in politics, the Unitarian church, agriculture, citrus farming, ranching, and commerce. Alfred E. Hawley, Edwin S. Nash, and D. Edson Smith played prominent roles in Socialist party politics in Orange County in the early twentieth century. When Hawley became head of the party, the county central committee met regularly in his retail store.<sup>26</sup> D. Edson Smith and Arthur Towner, James Towner's son, joined the Pomological and Agricultural Society of Orange County and in the late 1880s published an article in the *Rural Californian* entitled "How to Make a Living from Ten Acres." Smith himself farmed nine acres of deciduous fruits on the outskirts of Santa Ana. In addition, Harley Hamilton, the half-brother of Augusta Hamilton Towner, served as musical director of the Los Angeles

*A typical promotional pamphlet for Santa Ana in the 1880s carried the following objective: "The dissemination of rational information concerning the advantages of the Santa Ana Valley, and the encouragement, by all proper and honorable measures, of immigration thereto."*

Symphony Orchestra for nearly twenty years from 1894 to 1913, and Ransom Reid, Jr., born in Oneida in 1865, was responsible for establishing the city's water and sewer system and served as Santa Ana Water Superintendent from 1900 to 1920.<sup>27</sup>

Throughout their lives, the Townerites in California remained loyal to each other, and relations between them and the Oneida Community continued for many years. Indeed, they were often referred to affectionately at Oneida as "the California colony." Through extensive landholdings, intermarriage, and common social, political, agricultural, commercial, and religious activities, if not through group living and publically-espoused pantagamy, the Townerites' former communal ties persisted in the Far West. We need to abandon, therefore, the notion of a permanent "breakup" of the Oneida Community.<sup>28</sup>

In Robert V. Hine's pathbreaking book published in 1953, he explored the history of seventeen California utopian colonies ranging from Northern California's Icaria Speranza to Southern California's secular Llano del Rio and the Point Loma Theosophists in San Diego.<sup>29</sup> More recently, Kevin Starr, in his splendid book, *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915* (1973), called attention to the significant "counter-patterns" to the vast ranchos that characterized early land-use in California—the large landholdings that so aroused the moral indignation of social critics such as Henry George and Carey McWilliams. Starr points to the 1851 purchase of a 35,509-acre tract in the San Bernardino Valley by a group of Mormons, who carefully planned a landscaped town with a model irrigation system. Shortly thereafter, he notes, a group of German immigrants to San Francisco cooperatively purchased a Southern California tract from the former Rancho San Juan Cajón de Santa Ana and founded the colony of Anaheim. Furthermore, Starr documents that in 1874 a group from Indianapolis purchased part of the Rancho San Pascual at the western end of the San Gabriel Valley, where members built cottages



and planted extensive vineyards and orchards. In 1875 their settlement was named Pasadena. It was in these kinds of towns, Starr argues, that the Californians "lived both on the land and in community," surpassing the primitive economy and culture of the early ranchos by introducing irrigation systems, diversified crops, cooperative marketing, modern commercial practices, churches, schools, libraries, and concert halls.<sup>30</sup> To this growing list now must be added the contributions of the Townerites. In reconstructing this aspect of Southern Califor-



nia's social and economic history, therefore, historians would do well to examine Santa Ana not only as an arena of social change but as a case study of what Starr calls "a return of the middle class to the land."<sup>31</sup>

The photographs on pages 223 and 227 (top row) are courtesy the Oneida Community Historical Collections; on page 220, courtesy the Historical Collection, First American Title Insurance Company; on page 227 (left), courtesy Ms. E. A. (Pauline) Reuter, Tustin, California; on page 228 (below), Ms. Thelma Lillis, Santa Ana; on page 228 (top), Mr. Otto Hawley, Santa Ana; on page 230, Special Collections, University of California, Irvine.

## Notes

1. The author expresses special appreciation to Nathaniel L. Bliss for joining in the quest to understand the meaning and relevance of Utopian Socialism. His suggestions and those of Professors Robert Hine and Laurence Veysey have been most helpful. As well, many Oneida descendants helpfully provided family photographs and other materials. Among the many accounts of the Oneida Community, see especially the following: John Humphrey Noyes, *History of American Socialisms* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1870); William A. Hinds, *American Communities* (Oneida, N.Y.: Office of the American Socialist, 1878); Robert Allerton Parker, *A Yankee Saint: John Humphrey Noyes and the Oneida Community* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1935); Maren Lockwood Carden, *Oneida: Utopian Community to Modern Corporation* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969); Constance Noyes Robertson, *Oneida Community: The Breakup, 1876-1881* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1972); and Robert David Thomas, *The Man Who Would Be Perfect: John Humphrey Noyes and the Utopian Impulse* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977). For more general treatments, see Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972); Laurence Veysey, *The Communal Experience: Anarchist and Mystical Counter-Cultures in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973); and Michael Fellman, *The Unbounded Frame: Freedom and Community in Nineteenth Century American Utopianism* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973).
2. On Noyes theological revisionism and on religious revivalism in America beginning in the 1830s, see the following: a series of essays titled "Perfectionism, the Antecedent of Communism," in the *Oneida Circular*, 5 (June-September, 1868); *Bible Communism* (Brooklyn: Office of the Circular, 1853); John Humphrey Noyes, *Salvation From Sin: The End of Christian Faith* (Oneida, N.Y., 1876); George Wallingford Noyes, ed., *Religious Experiences of John Humphrey Noyes* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1923); Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); Timothy L. Smith,

*Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth Century America*

(New York: Harper and Row, 1957); Norman Walter Haight, "Faith and Freedom in Christian Utopia: An Analysis of the Thought of John Humphrey Noyes and the Oneida Community" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 1972); Laurence Veysey, ed., *The Perfectionists: Radical Social Thought in the North, 1815-1860* (New York: Wiley, 1973); and Robert S. Fogarty, "Oneida: A Utopian Search for Religious Security," *Labor History*, 14 (1973).

3. See the introduction by Murray Levine and Barbara Benedict Bunker to the reissue of *Mutual Criticism* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1975), especially pp. vii-ix.
4. The letter is quoted at length in Parker, *A Yankee Saint*, p. 44. Gates' magazine was called *Battle-Axe and Weapons of War*, from whose name the "Battle-Axe Letter" acquired its title.
5. Oneida Perfectionists were harshly critical of Mormonism, Fourierism, and Owenism for their alleged shortcomings on the "women question." See, for example, various articles in the *Oneida Circular* and the *American Socialist* (successor to the *Oneida Circular* in March, 1876): December 21, 1868; July 12, July 26, October 4, 1869; February 8, May 10, November 15, 1877. On polygamy, see *Bible Communism*, p. 84: "In following Christ we are further from the position of polygamists than ordinary society. It is plain that the fundamental principle of monogamy and polygamy is the same: to wit, the ownership of woman by man. The monogamist claims one woman as his wife—the polygamist, two or a dozen; but the essential thing, the bond of relationship constituting a marriage, in both cases is the same, namely, a claim of ownership." On Josiah Warren, see Yehosua Arieli, *Individualism and Nationalism in American Ideology* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964), pp. 285-292, and Hal D. Sears, *The Sex Radicals: Free Love in High Victorian America* (Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1977), pp. 5, 156, 157. Published works on the Berlin Heights free-love community are rare, but see Kenneth William McKinley, "A Guide to the Communitistic communities of Ohio," *The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly*, 46 (1937): pp. 1-15; William F. Vartorella, "Free Love War Waged in Ohio," *Ohio Historical Society Echoes*, June, 1974, and Vartorella, "The Other 'Peculiar Institution': The Free Thought and Free Love Reform Press in Ohio During Rebellion and Reconstruction, 1861-1877" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio University, 1977). See note 14 for a brief discussion of the Oneidans' adamant rejection of sexual anarchy and free love.
6. *Oneida Circular*, April 27, 1874. Also see *Bible Communism*, pp. 26-38, 82-113.
7. See John Humphrey Noyes, *Male Continence* (Oneida: Office of the Oneida Circular, 1872).
8. On the Oneida Community's eugenics experiment, see E. Van de Warker, "A Gynecological Study of the Oneida Community," *American Journal of Obstetrics and Diseases of Women*, 17 (1884): pp. 790-795; Anita Newcomb McGee, "An Experiment in Human Stipiculture," *The American Anthropologist*, 4 (October, 1891): pp. 320-324; Hilda Herrick Noyes and George Wallingford Noyes, "The Oneida Community Experiment in Stipiculture," *Eugenics, Genetics, and the Family*, 1 (1923): pp. 374-386; Mary Bishop Ross, "The Kingdom of God Has Come," *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, October, 1974, pp. 31-32; and Philip R. Wyatt, "John Humphrey Noyes and the Stipiculture Experiment," *Journal of the History of Medicine*, 31 (January, 1976): pp. 55-56.
9. Albert T. Mollegen, "The Religious Basis of Western Socialism," in Donald Drew Egbert and Stow Persons, eds., *Socialism and American Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), p. 115.
10. V. F. Calverton, *Where Angels Dared to Tread: Socialist and Communist Utopian Colonies in the United States* (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1942), p. 283.
11. Parker, *A Yankee Saint*, p. 267.

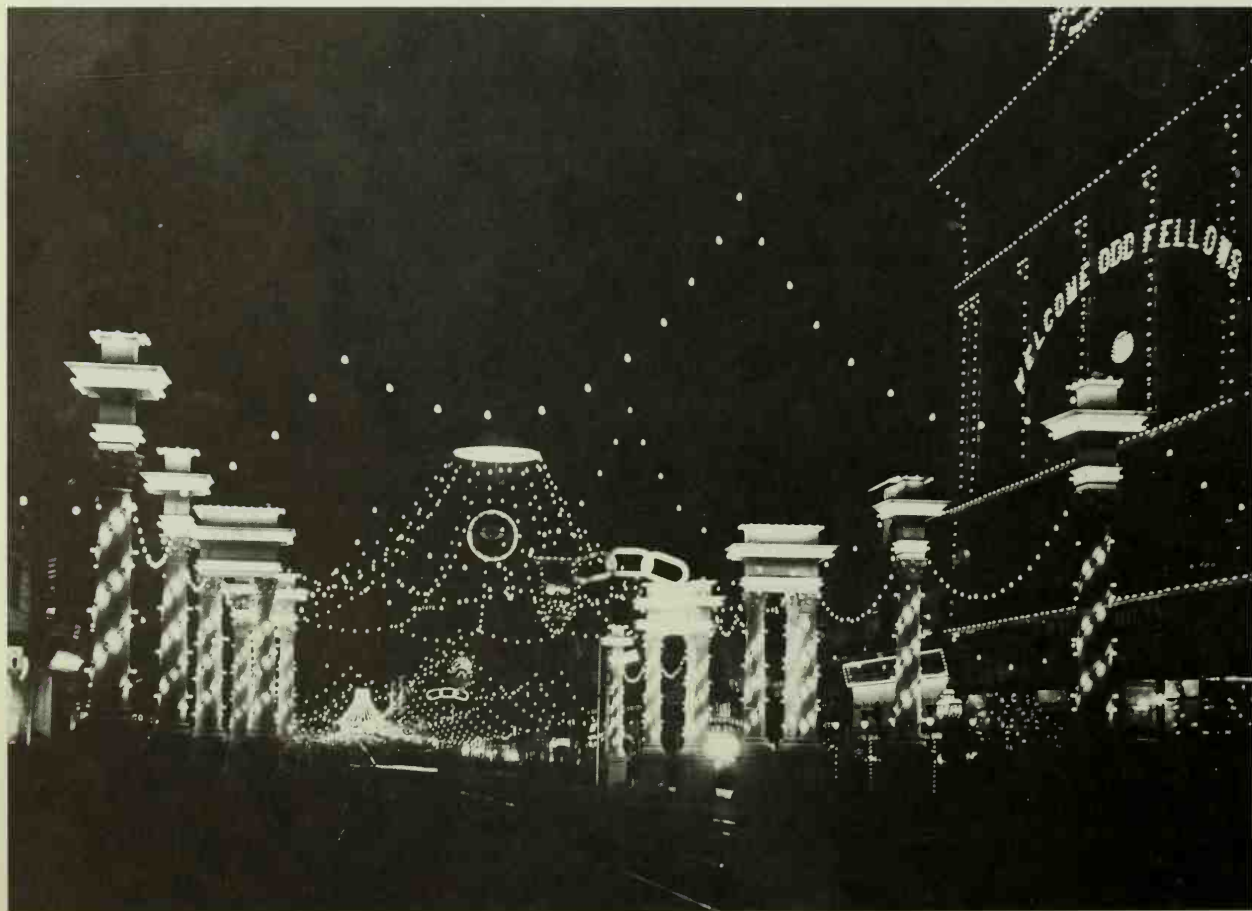
12. Robertson, *Oneida Community: The Breakup, 1876-1881*, pp. 14-21; Carden, *Oneida: Utopian Community to Modern Corporation*, p. 111.
13. Fearing criminal action by a group of clergymen led by Professor John W. Mears of Hamilton College and unable to depend upon a united Oneida Community, Noyes secretly fled to the safety of Canada in late June, 1879. There, beginning in January, 1881, Noyes kept a "Niagara Journal," a remarkable document which apparently only Maren Lockwood Carden has incorporated into her analysis of the "breakup." In the summer of 1977, this author found this precious journal disintegrating in a basement repository in the Oneida Mansion House. The work is now properly housed in the Oneida Community Historical Collection.
14. Noyes and his associates had long criticized free-love advocates such as Stephen Pearl Andrews, who was one of the first to apply Josiah Warren's doctrine of individual sovereignty to the "Realm of the Affections." The free-love cause eventually merged with spiritualism in the early 1850s, when the doctrine of "spiritual affinity" was introduced. This doctrine, founded on Charles Fourier's theory of passionless attraction, was sternly rejected by Oneida Perfectionists, who wished to stand well apart from sexual anarchism, Stephen Pearl Andrews, and his followers from Berlin Heights. In denying that the individual was sovereign in all relations, the Oneidans stressed instead the importance of collective commitment, responsibility, and religious unity. Because of this, the Towner group faced an uphill struggle in persuading the Oneidans of their acceptability as Bible Communists. Extant is extensive and revealing correspondence (some thirty-eight items) between Towner and members of his group, including his wife, Cinderella, his sister, Martha S. Reeve, and her husband, Gaylord W. Reeve, and the "Oneida family" in the period April, 1866, to December, 1867 (and published in the *Daily Journal of the Oneida Community* and the *O. C. Daily*). Towner, his wife, and his children alternately visited Oneida to be scrutinized as potential members. In November, 1866, the Towner clan even moved from Berlin Heights to Cleveland in order to demonstrate their rejection of free love and the principles of individual sovereignty. On November 29, 1866, after requesting Mutual Criticism, Towner wrote to the community: "I confess my besetting sins to have been willfulness, individual sovereignty, and of course infidelity. I hope to have repented of them all. . . ." The Oneida Community, in turn, sent representatives to Ohio to investigate Towner and his associates. But it was not until May, 1874, that the so-called "Cleveland Community" finally moved to Oneida as members. See *O. C. Annals*. On Andrews, see Madeleine B. Stern, *The Pantarch: A Biography of Stephen Pearl Andrews* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), and Hal D. Sears, *The Sex Radicals*. For the attitudes of the Oneida Community toward Andrews and Berlin Heights, see statements in the following issues of the *Oneida Circular*: October 3, 1870; August 7, 1871; August 5, 1872; December 8, 1873; July 13, 1874; and June 14, 1877.
15. It would appear from the *O. C. Annals* that Frederick Towner, the son of James and Cinderella, joined in October, 1872. He died in Oneida on June 9, 1875.
16. See Spencer C. Olin, Jr., "The Anti-Noyes Faction: The Townerites and the 'Breakup' of the Oneida Community," a paper presented at a conference on utopias and communes held at the University of Nebraska at Omaha in October, 1978. Several essays on the rule of grace vs. the rule of law appear in the *Oneida Circular* in the 1860s and 1870s. See, for example, the lecture by Mr. Hamilton reported in the September 10, 1866 issue: "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Moses governed by law, precept, and rule. But Jesus Christ introduced a system of governing by grace and truth. . . . Law and fault-finding go together. . . ." In the *American Socialist*, see March 15, 1879: "The great mistake of the past, under the Fourier and Owen dispensation, was the attempt to manufacture Communities by the machinery of conventions, constitutions and By-Laws."
17. Oneida Community migrants to Southern California in the 1880s (most lived in Santa Ana, while others resided in Los Angeles and Riverside) included:
 

George D. Allen Lillian (Towner) Allen Jared Allen (b. 1884) Rodney Allen (b. 1890) Harley Hamilton Harriet Mallory Hatch Julius Hawley Sarah Mallory Hawley Roswell Hawley Ida Blood Hawley Alfred Hawley Elizabeth Mallory Hawley Ralph Hawley Arline Hawley Otto Hawley John P. Hutchins Fanny Parker Hutchins Mary Blood Parker Hutchins Ellen F. Hutchins Ransom Reid, Jr. (son of Ellen F. Hutchins) Edward P. Inslee	Isabelle B. Inslee Frederick A. Marks Martha J. (Hawley) Marks Allan Van Velzer (son of Martha Marks) Emerson J. Marks Ernest Marks (b. 1887) Edwin S. Nash Martha (Towner) Reeve Nash Evan Rupert Nash D. Edson Smith Stella Worden Smith Eugene Deming Smith Henrietta Sweet James W. Towner Cinderella Sweet Towner Arthur Towner Augusta Hamilton Towner Esther (Abbott-Hamilton) Towner Heber Frederick Towner (b. 1882) Rutherford Towner Xarifa Towner
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- James Towner had several sisters, two of whom were part of the Berlin Heights group. Martha went with him to Oneida, where she married Gaylord W. Reeve and, later, Edwin S. Nash (with whom she came to Santa Ana). Maria stayed at Berlin Heights and married John Parker Lasley, with whom she moved to Santa Ana in 1887. They were accompanied by their five children: Emerson James, Chloe Frances, John Towner, Everett Parker, and Mary Elizabeth. See James W. Towner, *A Genealogy of the Towner Family* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Printing and Binding House, 1910), pp. 150-151.
18. In August, 1879, Noyes proposed the abandonment of Complex Marriage, a proposal which required careful deliberation by community members. Hinds and Towner were among a few to oppose Noyes in this issue. Hinds is quoted as declaring: "[As] communism and marriage are based upon fundamentally different principles, it seems to me that the introduction of marriage into the Community is a perilous undertaking that may endanger, sooner or later, the most important features of our Community life." In a paper submitted to the Community on August 27, Towner stated his position: "I do not believe in marriage as a remedy for our troubles. I do not believe that marriage and communism can exist together. The only question with me is whether or not this proposed change will prove to be an inlet of the spirit of marriage which will overcome that of communism and at no late day disintegrate the Community. . . ." Despite the opposition of Hinds and Towner, the community voted to endorse Noyes' proposal. Henceforth, members were to return to monogamy or celibacy. See Robertson, *Oneida Community: The Breakup, 1876-1881*, pp. 153-159.
19. David J. Pivar, *Purity Crusade: Sexual Morality and Social Control, 1868-1900* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973), p. 43. Also see Charles A. Cannon, "The Awesome Power of Sex: The PolITICAL Campaign Against Mormon Polygamy," *Pacific Historical Review*, 43 (February, 1974): pp. 61-82, and James L. Clayton, "The Supreme Court, Polygamy, and the Enforcement of Morals in 19th Century America," a paper delivered at the Pacific Coast Branch Meeting of the American Historical Association in August, 1978.

20. Santa Ana *Weekly Standard*, June 9, 1882.
21. In the late-1850s, a group of German merchants in San Francisco decided to purchase a tract of land in Southern California to engage in grape raising. They organized the Los Angeles Vineyard Company and purchased 1,200 acres of Rancho San Juan Cajón de Santa Ana, naming their new colony "Anaheim" (or home by the Santa Ana River). For twenty-five years, Anaheim was the greatest wine producing district in California, but in 1885 the vines were destroyed by a disease known as Phyloxera. See Leon O. Whitsell, *One Hundred Years of Freemasonry in California*, vol. 4 (Grand Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons of California, 1950). Perhaps this earlier collective enterprise helped attract Townerites to California, as might have Charles Nordoff's description of the region in *California, For Health, Pleasure, and Residence* (1872). Furthermore, a similar communistic, spiritualist society called "The Societas Fraternia" was organized about four miles northeast of Anaheim in 1878. Subjected to public criticism, it soon disbanded. See the Anaheim *Gazette*, May 10, 1879, and Charles Herbert Rinehart, "A Study of the Anaheim Community" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Southern California, 1933), p. 56.
22. Sylvia Noyes Paquette, daughter of Dr. Hilda Herrick Noyes, brought this land-acquisition agreement to my attention and offered other advice and assistance.
23. Research assistant John R. Shaw helped examine hundreds of Townerite land transactions for a period of twenty years. Their disposition of land clearly indicates not only willingness to favor fellow Townerites but exceedingly sound business judgment. On one occasion, George D. Allen, the West Coast agent for Oneida Community, Ltd. reported to William A. Hinds: "Just sold my lot on 4th St. that I paid \$467.92 for a few weeks ago for \$1,000 to a gentleman from Chicago." See Allen to Hinds, November 12, 1886, William A. Hinds Papers, Oneida Community Historical Collection, Kenwood, New York. The land transaction data are housed in the Santa Ana Recorder's Office.
24. On the various attempts to achieve county division, see J. M. Guinn, "History of the Movements for the Division of Los Angeles County," *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California (1888-89)*, pp. 25-29; Samuel Armor, *History of Orange County, California* (Los Angeles: Historic Record Co., 1921), pp. 1-2, 34-35; Owen C. Coy, *California County Boundaries* (Berkeley: California Historical Survey Commission, 1923), pp. 33, 39, 41; and James Sleeper, *Turn the Rascals Out: The Life and Times of Orange County's Fighting Editor, Dan M. Baker* (Trabuco Canyon, Calif.: California Classics, 1973), pp. 97-110. Also see various issues of the *Anaheim Gazette* and the *Santa Ana Standard* from March-June, 1889.
25. An initial review of Towner's legal opinions, including those appealed to the state supreme court, reveals a high degree of competency, especially in the areas of torts and contracts.
26. See Alfred E. Hawley to Hinds, November 6, 1906, William A. Hinds Papers. For information on the Nash family, see the Evan Rupert Nash Papers, The Division of Special Collections, Stanford University. These papers are the most complete collection of materials relating to members of the California colony other than those at Oneida.
27. Oral history interview with Ms. Pauline (Reid) Reuter, daughter of Ransom Reid, Jr., December 17, 1976.
28. Alfred Hawley, for example, wrote in 1887 that: "The two boxes sent us March 8th came to hand April 9th. . . . Many times did tears spring to our eyes and lumps rise in our throats while unpacking those boxes [of clothing and money]. . . . If any of you come to California for a visit—you will find a welcome at our home and a stopping place." See Alfred E. Hawley to William A. Hinds and friends, April 13, 1887, Hinds Papers. Furthermore, on many occasions, long-time friends from Oneida visited members of the California colony, who, in turn, made journeys back to Oneida. See *The Kenwood Chronicle*, March 31, 1894, and September, 1898, and *The Quadrangle*, April, 1908. Towner himself returned to Oneida in 1897 and again in the summer of 1911, when he spent six weeks there with his daughter, Lillian, her husband, George Allen, and her children. Joining them were Frederick and Martha Marks. See *The Quadrangle*, May, June, July, August, and September, 1911. Towner, who died November 19, 1913 (at the age of 90) and was cremated in Los Angeles, evidently wished his remains and those of his immediate family to be returned to his beloved Oneida. Today a Towner gravestone rests in the Oneida community graveyard in Kenwood.
29. Robert V. Hine, *California's Utopian Colonies* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1953).
30. Kevin Starr, *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 200-209.
31. For recent books and articles that might serve as research models, see the following: Stuart Blumin, *The Urban Threshold: Growth and Change in a Nineteenth-Century American Community* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976); Stephanie Grauman Wolf, *Urban Village: Population, Community, and Family Structure in Germantown, Pennsylvania, 1683-1800* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976); Oliver Knight, "Toward an Understanding of the Western Town," *Western Historical Quarterly*, 4 (January, 1973): 27-42; Gilbert Stelter, "The City and Westward Expansion: A Western Case Study," *ibid.*, 4 (April, 1973): 187-202; Don Harrison Doyle, "Social Theory and New Communities in Nineteenth-Century America," *ibid.*, 8 (April, 1977): 151-165; David Hornbeck and Mary Tucey, "The Submergence of a People: Migration and Occupational Structure in California, 1850," *Pacific Historical Review*, 46 (August, 1977): 471-484; and David C. Hammack, "Problems in the Historical Study of Power in the Cities and Towns of the United States, 1800-1960," *American Historical Review*, 83 (April, 1978): 323-349.



# George Roe and California's Centennial of Light



*One of the state's first displays of decorative outdoor lighting was created on Market Street for a meeting of the International Order of Oddfellows in San Francisco in 1904.*

*This year's nationwide Centennial of Light celebration marks an important date. One hundred years ago in Menlo Park, New Jersey, Thomas Alva Edison demonstrated the world's first practical incandescent light bulb.*

*In September, 1979, California also celebrates its own contribution to the development of electric lighting. A century ago San Francisco became the first city in the United States to have a central generating station which distributed electricity to the premises of customers.*

*San Franciscans, of course, had a modicum of familiarity with electricity in 1879; a few buildings boasted arc lighting supplied by primitive individual generators. But in September of that year, the infant California Electric Light Company sent electricity to twenty-one sputtering arc lamps from the first central power station in the United States.*

*The California Electric Light Company, ancestor of today's Pacific Gas and Electric Company, holds the distinction of being the first electric utility in the United States. Three years prior to the opening of Edison's Pearl Street Station in New York City, it began selling electricity to commercial establishments. The story of this signal event follows.*

The celebration in 1979 of California's Centennial of Light easily might not have happened. One day in San Francisco a century ago, a young entrepreneur named George H. Roe called his business partners together to witness the test of what they hoped would be a workable dynamo for generating electricity. Roe applied power from a small coal-fired steam boiler to the machine he had designed and built. It responded by turning at the rate of 1,200 revolutions per minute but did not produce electric current. Unwilling to admit failure and "endeavoring to taste enough current to hang a hope upon," Roe put both ends of the wire in his mouth,<sup>1</sup> but to no avail. The gesture was one of scientific ignorance rather than foolhardiness.

Had George Roe succeeded in his attempt to generate electricity, his career would have ended abruptly—with a funeral.<sup>2</sup> Certainly we would not be marking the Centennial of Roe's California Electric Light Company, the first electric company ancestor of today's Pacific Gas and Electric Company.<sup>3</sup>

The deficiency of Roe's first experimental dynamo eventually was explained; a decorative metal band placed around the bobbin of the machine's armature had neutralized the power-generating magnetism. Not until later when the band was removed as the dynamo was being scrapped did the machine generate electricity.<sup>4</sup>

Roe entered the field of electric generation by chance, for like most San Franciscans, he knew little about electricity. He was an ambitious young Canadian bent on making his mark in commercial San Francisco who, with a partner, had started the money brokerage firm of Roe and Plummer.

One day a Wallace-Farmer brand dynamo and lamp came into the firm's hands by default on a loan, and when Roe and Plummer decided to go separate ways, Roe received the seemingly useless electric equipment in his share of the firm's assets. When the generator proved unsatisfactory under testing, Roe ordered a new model made. Then he designed another, the one which almost proved his undoing. Although the machine failed, Roe remained determined to become the pioneering owner of an electric company, and his instincts proved right.

In the 1870s, only gas lighting brightened San Francisco's dark nights. Gold rush residents had walked in near darkness, lighting their homes and an occasional street with oil lamps and candles. Among the Forty-

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*In 1880 gas lights illuminated the facade of this shop on Market between Third and Fourth streets, only a few steps from the site of the original generating station of the California Electric Light Company.*  
I. W. Taber Photograph.

*Entrepreneur George H. Roe experimented with dynamos to produce electricity and later founded the nation's first electric utility.*



niners, however, was a machinist and foundry worker named Peter Donahue, who was destined to bring the first gas lighting to San Francisco. A failure at gold mining, Donahue had dreamed bold ideas about San Francisco's future. Climbing the sand hills west of Kearny Street with a companion and looking down at the young town, Donahue reflected: "This is going to be a great city at no distant day; there will have to be gasworks and waterworks here, and whoever has faith enough to embark in either of these enterprises will make money."<sup>5</sup>

In 1850, the city's only street lighting was provided by oil lamps installed along Merchant Street in October of that year. Accordingly, Donahue convinced his two brothers that they should embark on a project to bring

gas to the city. None of them, however, knew about manufacturing gas, an unknown industry in the West. (Baltimore boasted a gas company in 1816 and Boston and New York in 1822 and 1823, but it was 1850 before midwestern towns like Chicago could generate gas light.)

Undaunted, the adventurous Donahues founded the San Francisco Gas Company in 1852. It was the first gas company in the West and the first gas predecessor of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company. The company was given a franchise by the city council to erect a gasworks for extracting the gas from coal, to lay pipes in the street, and to install street lamps for lighting the city with "brilliant gas" at a cost of 32½ cents per lamp per night. Householders, the charter read, were to receive light "at such rates as will make it to their interest to use it in preference to any other material."<sup>6</sup>

San Francisco's new gas plant was ready for operation on February 11, 1854, and gas was immediately released into the pipes. A reporter for the *Daily Alta California* described the results:

San Francisco by gas-light—Last evening, between six and seven o'clock the streets of San Francisco were lighted with gas for the first time. . . . It was not a very favorable evening for the exhibition of the gas-light, as its brilliancy paled somewhat beneath the rays of Luna, who exhibited a full face last evening, and seemed to be enjoying a sort of a quiet laugh at the gas-light. Nevertheless, a cheerfulness seemed to pervade the streets that has never been among us before.<sup>7</sup>

San Francisco's gaslights won immediate public favor. The demand grew steadily, from 237 customers in the first year of operation to 563 in 1855. It was long after electricity had proved a better means of lighting San Francisco, in fact, that the last of the city's outdoor gaslights were quenched on December 27, 1930.

The challenge of understanding and using electricity, of course, had fascinated men long before Roe's and Edison's time. In 600 B.C., the Greek philosopher, Thales, first observed static electricity when he absent-mindedly stroked a polished piece of iridescent amber and found





that it would first attract, then repel, light objects like lint, chaff, and feathers. Over the intervening centuries, many others added to the growing body of knowledge about electricity. For instance, Queen Elizabeth's physician, William Gilbert, repeated Thales' experiment. In his book, *De Magnete*, he observed the fundamentals of magnetism, naming the mysterious force "elektron," the Greek word for amber.

In the eighteenth century, Francis Hauksbee used electricity to produce a glow, which he called "electric light," in a hollow, glass globe emptied of air. Benjamin Franklin, in his historic 1752 experiment conducted

during a thunderstorm, identified lightning as electricity. In 1800, Alessandro Volta invented the first device to produce a continuous current of electricity. Eight years later, Sir Humphrey Davy used Volta's discovery to produce the arc light. The principle of electromagnetic induction, which led to the development of the dynamo as a source of electric power, was discovered by Michael Faraday, Davy's pupil. With the mid-nineteenth century invention in Europe of the Gramme dynamo, a machine capable of producing sustained electric current, the use of arc lights began to grow.

Being large and extremely bright, arc lights proved

*Completed in 1875, Ralston's Palace Hotel was wired throughout with many battery-operated electrical conveniences, including fire alarms and clocks. In the foreground of this 1877 photograph is a gas streetlight.*

best suited for streets and other outdoor illumination. In the 1860s they began to appear in European cities, lighting the streets of Paris by the 1870s. In 1878, arc lights illuminated a field in England where 30,000 people watched the world's first evening football game.<sup>8</sup>

A well-advertised public demonstration of arc lighting occurred at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876, and John Wanamaker's Philadelphia department store quickly added electric illumination. San Franciscans witnessed demonstrations of arc lamps in the same period, and in 1879 George Roe's California Electric Light Company began its operation with the capacity of lighting twenty-one arc lamps.

But the bright light cast by arc lamps was less than satisfactory for most purposes. Robert Louis Stevenson called it "nightmare light" and urged: "Such a light as this should shine forth only on murders and public crime, or along the corridors of lunatic asylums, a horror to heighten horror. To look at it only once is to fall in love with gas."<sup>9</sup> As well, the arc lamps' carbon electrodes burned out easily and required constant attendance, and their bulk and excessive brilliance made them unsuitable for use in kitchens and parlors.

Acknowledging these problems, inventors such as Edison continued to seek a better alternative, one which would be effective, reliable, safe, and cheap. They achieved tantalizing partial successes with incandescent lamps, but on October 21, 1879, Edison perfected the first practical incandescent lamp. Edison's lamp, described as "red hot hairpins in a glass bottle," consisted of a loop of carbonized cotton thread mounted in a vacuum which prevented oxidation. It burned forty hours until Edison purposely shattered the bulb to make further tests on the filament. While other men also had experimented with incandescent lamps, the distinction of Edison's

approach was that from the first he envisioned the incandescent lamp as part of an entire lighting system which would include dynamos, switches, wiring, and meters.

By the time of Edison's brilliant contributions, San Franciscans already had been alerted to the great potential of electric lighting. Father Joseph M. Neri, a Jesuit priest and professor of natural philosophy at St. Ignatius College, forebear of the University of San Francisco, had conducted a series of lighting experiments at the college on Market Street between Fourth and Fifth streets. In 1871 Neri installed an electric light in a Market Street window for the Silver Jubilee of Pope Pius IX. On that night, twenty thousand people marching in a night parade were impressed by the remarkable lighting, and the college historian noted that "the parlors, halls and rooms facing Market Street were bright with gas jets, while from the largest of the windows the electric light sent forth its beams, lighting up Market Street and the adjoining buildings." Three years later Father Neri was honored by a gift from the Compagnie l'Alliance in France of a large electromagnetic generating machine that had been used during the siege of Paris in 1871. He later wired this generator to a powerful searchlight, which was mounted on the bell tower of the college to give light "such as to be seen at a distance of two hundred miles."<sup>10</sup>

In 1875, a year after Father Neri received his electromagnetic generator from France, San Francisco's magnificent Palace Hotel opened its doors. This great hostelry built by William C. Ralston was the first public building to dramatize the potential of electric lighting for appreciative westerners.

Ralston had held court in San Francisco from 1860 to 1875 like a golden prince of the young city. Beginning life as a ship's carpenter and a clerk on Mississippi River boats, Ralston journeyed to San Francisco, where he prospered mightily and founded the Bank of California.

Ralston was at the peak of his powers in 1875 when



the city's financial climate turned uncertain in the aftermath of the discovery of the silver mines of the Comstock Lode. Bonanza stocks were under attack on the morning of August 26, 1875, when rumors began circulating about the Bank of California, which was deeply involved in financing the silver mines of Virginia City. In the afternoon, President Ralston walked from his private office to the counter and ordered payments to stop. The next morning, the directors of the bank found Ralston's financial dealings had seriously depleted the bank's funds, and they demanded and received his resignation. Ralston's career was at an end.<sup>11</sup>

Later in the same day, the young entrepreneur George Roe called at the bank to withdraw a draft which he had deposited in the bank upon his arrival in San Francisco. Elbowing his way through the crowd, he asked for a personal interview with Ralston. Despite the pandemonium, Roe was admitted to Ralston's office. There the young man asked Ralston to certify his check and

the sympathetic Ralston complied, giving what was probably the last order of his life. Within an hour he was dead, a suicide or accident victim on his daily swim in the bay's frigid waters.<sup>12</sup>

Senator William C. Sharon of Nevada assumed ownership of Ralston's nearly completed Palace Hotel, and within a few weeks, a splendid banquet honoring General Philip Sheridan was held in the grand hotel whose "like had never been seen in the West." Standing "seven stories high and nearly one-quarter of a mile in circumference on a site worth \$400,000 alone," according to the hotel's historian, the building boasted eight hundred rooms and its dining room was furnished with "9,000 cuspidors, 8,800 side dishes, 8,000 vegetable dishes, and 4,000 cups and saucers. It cost \$5,000,000."<sup>13</sup>

A supplement to a weekly newspaper claimed that the Palace Hotel was "the greatest caravansary in the world." The headlines read: "Its Wonders—Its Promenades Amidst Tropical Verdure—Its Enormous





Proportions—Splendid Appointments—Richly Furnished Apartments—The Glorious View from its Summit—Electric Bells Everywhere—The Genius of W. C. Ralston Illustrated.”<sup>14</sup>

Of particular pride was the Palace’s electrical equipment, which was described in detail in the *San Francisco News Letter*:

Electricity is now universally used in every well-appointed hotel and private residence, and the clumsy, old-fashioned bell-pulls and mechanical bells which are never in order when wanted are things of the past. The electrical work in the Palace is a marvel of ingenuity and good workmanship. A touch upon a neat button in your room displays your number on an annunciator at the servants’ office on the same floor, rings a bell to attract attention, and then moves an indicator in the general office, thus enabling the clerks to keep the bell-boys on every floor under constant surveillance. There is also in each room a mercurial fire-alarm, in connection with the same communicators, which sounds an alarm at the office whenever the temperature reaches 120 deg. Fahrenheit. . . . It is a sleepless watchman which stands guard

day and night and should be in every room of every building. The electrical clocks are a[nother] feature. There are sixteen large and handsome time dials, running in perfect unison, and controlled by Field’s patent electric regulator. The entire electrical system embraces 125 miles of insulated wires and the machinery described, and the perfection of the work is shown by the fact that it is operated perfectly by three small cups of battery.<sup>15</sup>

The inventive spirit which characterized San Francisco’s interest in electricity continued at high pitch after the opening of the Palace. In 1878 Charles de Young, co-publisher of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, returned from an exposition in Paris with a Gramme generator and two Jablochkoff “candles” or arc lamps which the Russian inventor had asked de Young to introduce in the United States. Accordingly, the equipment was installed in the *Chronicle*’s new building at Bush and Kearny streets. The site received notice as “one of the brightest as well as handsomest in the city by reason of the five electric globes that stand like sentinels along the curbstones.”<sup>16</sup>

*Electric arc lighting is featured in this souvenir photograph of the audience in Baldwin's Theatre. The photograph was made "by electric light" on Friday evening, April 25, 1884.*

By the late 1870s, arc light generators and lamps had become available for commercial use in the United States. Charles F. Brush, an engineer employed by the Ohio-based Cleveland Telegraph Supply Company, had obtained a patent on his first dynamo in 1877, and he soon improved the design of both the generator and the arc lamp. Early in 1878, the Telegraph Supply Company began manufacturing the Brush equipment for commercial distribution.

In April, 1878, San Franciscans were invited to witness an exhibition of the light produced by the Brush dynamo and lamp at Mechanics' Pavilion. When William Sharon learned that the Brush generators were available, he ordered two arc lamps hung in the courtyard of the Palace Hotel so that it might outshine all competitors. Soon he added a large dynamo and more lamps. San Francisco thereby became one of the first American cities in which the Brush lighting system was installed.

Pleased with his Brush system, Sharon wrote on April 24, 1879, to the Telegraph Supply Company to express his satisfaction. "Gentlemen," he testified,

I have been using ten Electric Lights at the Palace Hotel, furnished from one No. 4 and one No. 5 Brush machine, using about ten horse-power. The lights are placed as follows: Two 3,000-candle lamps in the Court, displacing 510 gas jets; two 1,000- and one 3,000-candle lamps in the grand dining room, displacing 280 gas jets; one 1,000-candle lamp in the restaurant, displacing 150 gas jets; one 1,000-candle lamp in the office, displacing 100 gas jets; one 1,000-candle lamp in kitchen, displacing 20 gas jets; one 1,000-candle in bar room, displacing 25 gas jets; one 3,000-candle lamp in front of the hotel. The lamps in the dining room are switched from there to the front of the hotel, and to the bar room after the dinner hour, and all are working to our entire satisfaction. We feel free to state that the Brush Electric Light is a cheap, practical light to use where much light is needed.<sup>17</sup>

Sharon's letter was reprinted in 1881 in the company's promotional literature with the following addendum: "We also light, with equal success, the Baldwin Hotel at San Francisco. For hotel offices, corridors, dining

rooms, etc., it is especially valuable and insures a great saving over gas."<sup>18</sup>

San Francisco's nearby Baldwin Hotel was another extravagant expression of the commercial exuberance of the seventies. Built at Powell and Market streets in 1877 by Elias J. (Lucky) Baldwin, a brickmaker and hotel-keeper who made his first fortune on the mining exchange by clever scheming and luck, the hotel later installed its own lighting plant on Stevenson Street between Fifth and Sixth streets. In July, 1888, a Westinghouse alternating-current generator for the first time brought the glow of thousands of lights to the luxurious appointments of Baldwin's well-known inn.

San Francisco's hotels may take credit for introducing the pleasing glow of electricity to city residents, but it was the distribution of the Brush-system generators in San Francisco which provided the real catalyst for the development of electrical systems in the area. This was accomplished by William Kerr, who represented the Cleveland manufacturing company which had secured from Charles F. Brush the right to manufacture all the inventor's patents and which thereafter changed its corporate name to Brush Electric Company.

Soon William Kerr began promoting the new electric lighting apparatus for San Franciscans. A typical modest advertisement appearing in the *Mining and Scientific Press* announced: "Electric Light, Brush Patents, The Best, Cheapest, Cleanest, and Most Powerful Light in the World."<sup>19</sup>

Kerr's promotion of the Brush arc-lighting system coincided with George Roe's increasing determination to found a pioneering electrical company in San Francisco. Roe's gamble, however, was that lighting could be distributed successfully to customers from a central generating station.

Roe—in association with Messrs. John Bensley, O. F. Willey, J. R. Hardenbergh and R. A. Robinson—incorporated the California Electric Light Company with offices at 427 Montgomery Street on June 30, 1879. The company observed in its prospectus that electric light was not yet “offered for domestic purposes, because in dwellings it is not as cheap as gas or oil and is not yet adapted to such uses.”<sup>20</sup> For the time being, the company’s attention remained focused on the Brush arc-lighting system operating on individual business premises. William Kerr was invited to join forces with the new electric utility, and in return for the generating equipment he could procure, he received stocks and a directorship in the company.

The Brush lighting system helped San Franciscans welcome former President Ulysses S. Grant in September, 1879, in a celebration marked by delirious enthusiasm. According to an account in *Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*:

The city was brilliantly illuminated and rockets filled the air. The colored balls from Roman candles seemed to rain down from heaven, and a shower of flowers descended from every housetop and balcony along the route. . . . The streets were made as bright as day by the electric light, and the decorations, fantastic and beautiful as they were under the glare of the sun, looked still more pleasing, rich and elegant under the soft and mellow light of the great lanterns which the greatest of modern inventors has given us.<sup>21</sup>

Another account claimed that the “electric lights in many places rendered the scene brighter and lighter than the sunniest noon.”<sup>22</sup>

Inside the hotel, the blazing lights made the welcome even more dramatic. The reporter for *Leslie’s Illustrated* enthusiastically wrote that “the scene within the immense court of the Palace Hotel on the night when General Grant arrived was of surpassing beauty. Electric lights and 500 gas jets lit up the vast interior with a brilliant glow.”<sup>23</sup>

President Grant’s historic visit to San Francisco made

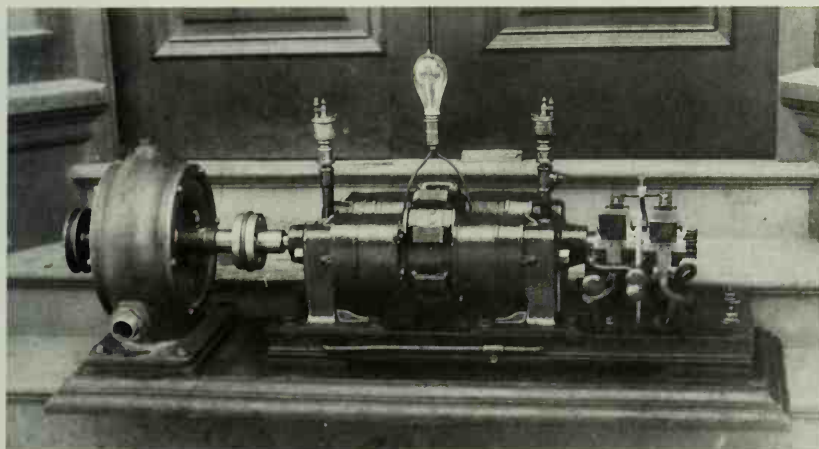
the city aware of the beauty and potential uses of electric light as never before. The public interest aroused by the visit was opportune for the California Electric Light Company, which was just then beginning operation of the first central generating station.

When completed, the company’s entire electric installation consisted of two Brush arc-light dynamos, one able to run sixteen lights and the other five. To house the Brush machines, the new electric utility erected a small frame building in the rear of the lot at the southwest corner of Fourth and Market streets. This undistinguished building housed what is believed to be the nation’s first central station for the sale and distribution of electric light. Electric lights were used in Philadelphia, San Francisco, and in other places in 1879 where power was available through individual generators, but the California Electric Light Company building was the first erected for the sole purpose of selling and distributing electric lighting to customers throughout a city.

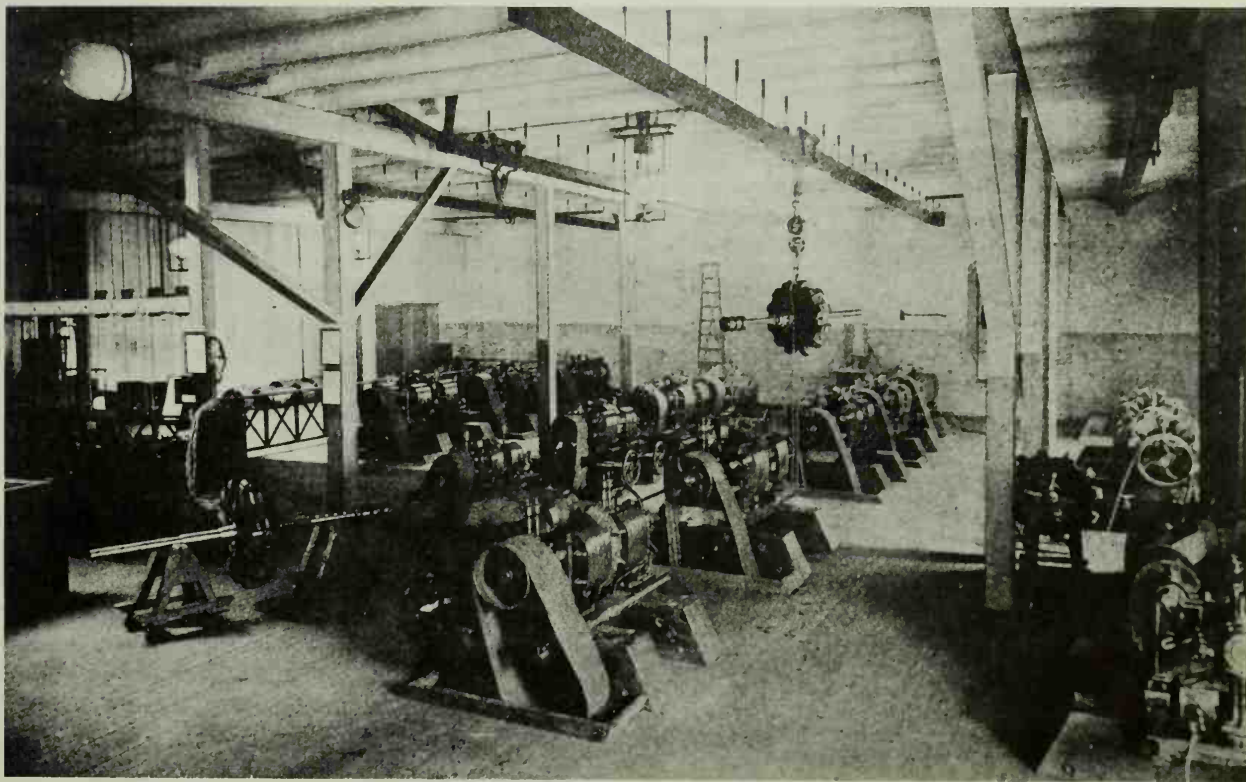
When the plant began serving clients in September, 1879, it offered light from sundown to midnight with no service on Sundays or holidays. Among its first customers were the Hastings clothing store at Sutter and Montgomery streets and the Andrews Diamond Palace on Montgomery north of California Street. As Roe and Kerr expected, the opportunity to purchase electricity was welcomed in San Francisco, even at a flat charge of \$10 per lamp per week. In January, 1880, the company added four more generators with a capacity of 100 lights to meet the growing demand.

On April 24, this first plant was destroyed by fire, and a new plant was built at 117 O’Farrell Street. Resuming lighting service, the growing company prospered. Within two years, however, the needs of San Francisco’s businesses for electric lighting had increased to the limit of the O’Farrell Street plant’s capacity. A new and larger installation was built, the first of many expansions by the utility. San Francisco’s first electric street light was erected in 1883 in front of the





*This Brush dynamo, installed in 1886 at the Inglenook vineyard in the Napa Valley, was like the Brush arc light machines used by Roe in the first central generating station in late 1879. After that plant burned in April, 1880, Roe's California Electric Light Company built this plant on O'Farrell Street.*





*Suspended from the frame of the Palace Hotel's glass skylight were two large arc light chandeliers installed in 1878 by Senator Sharon. The lights are barely visible in this photograph by I. W. Taber.*

city hall on a tall mast carrying four 4,000-candlepower lamps. In the outlying residential areas of the city, gas lighting continued to be the rule.

The lower-illumination incandescent lamps perfected by Edison in 1879 were not readily available until the early 1880s on the Pacific Coast. The first store to adopt the Edison lamps, the Rosenthal shoe store on Kearny Street, installed in 1887 a series of eight incandescent lamps fed by an arc circuit in each of its two display windows. The following year, forty lamps arranged in

five series from an arc circuit were installed in the Bush Street Theater. In 1888 the California Electric Light Company installed the first dynamo for incandescent service in its new office building on Stevenson Street.

By the late 1880s, the electricity industry was burgeoning across the nation, but electricity in the home remained a rarity. Central utilities such as the California Electric Light Company usually sold complete service, and it was prohibitively expensive to wire an entire home and install chandeliers, lamps, and meters. Roe's

residence at 2618 Pacific in San Francisco may have been the first dwelling in California lighted by electricity, but home lighting by electricity was uncommon in California residences until well into the 1890s.<sup>24</sup>

Electrical service to Northern and Central California farms also dates from this decade. In 1898, the first electric irrigation pump was put into operation by the Marysville Gas and Electric Company on the property of grape-grower J. W. Onstott near Yuba City.

The desire for electric lighting spread rapidly throughout Northern California, and George Roe encouraged this development as controller of the territorial rights to the Brush electrical equipment. As incandescent lamps became available, his California Electric Light Company began supplying service for residences.

One of the earliest developed electric appliances was the sewing machine, which was made possible by a battery-powered motor invented in 1886. Electric fans came into use by 1901, the first commercially successful electric range in 1908, and an electric washing machine in 1910. Electric irons and toasters were introduced in the same period. A Chicago businessman designed the first electric blanket in 1912 for a New York tuberculosis sanatorium, but it was 1926 before an electric refrigerator was installed in the White House.

In California, the cities of San Jose, Oakland, and Sacramento had established electric generating plants in the early and mid-1890s. Soon people across the state welcomed the new age of electric lighting. When hydroelectric power from the Sierra reached Oakland in 1901 and San Francisco in 1902, electric rates began to drop, and residential use to grow.

George Roe, as company incorporator and vendor of generators and lamps, was involved in the establishment of some seventeen electric companies in Northern California towns and cities, all of which ran their generators

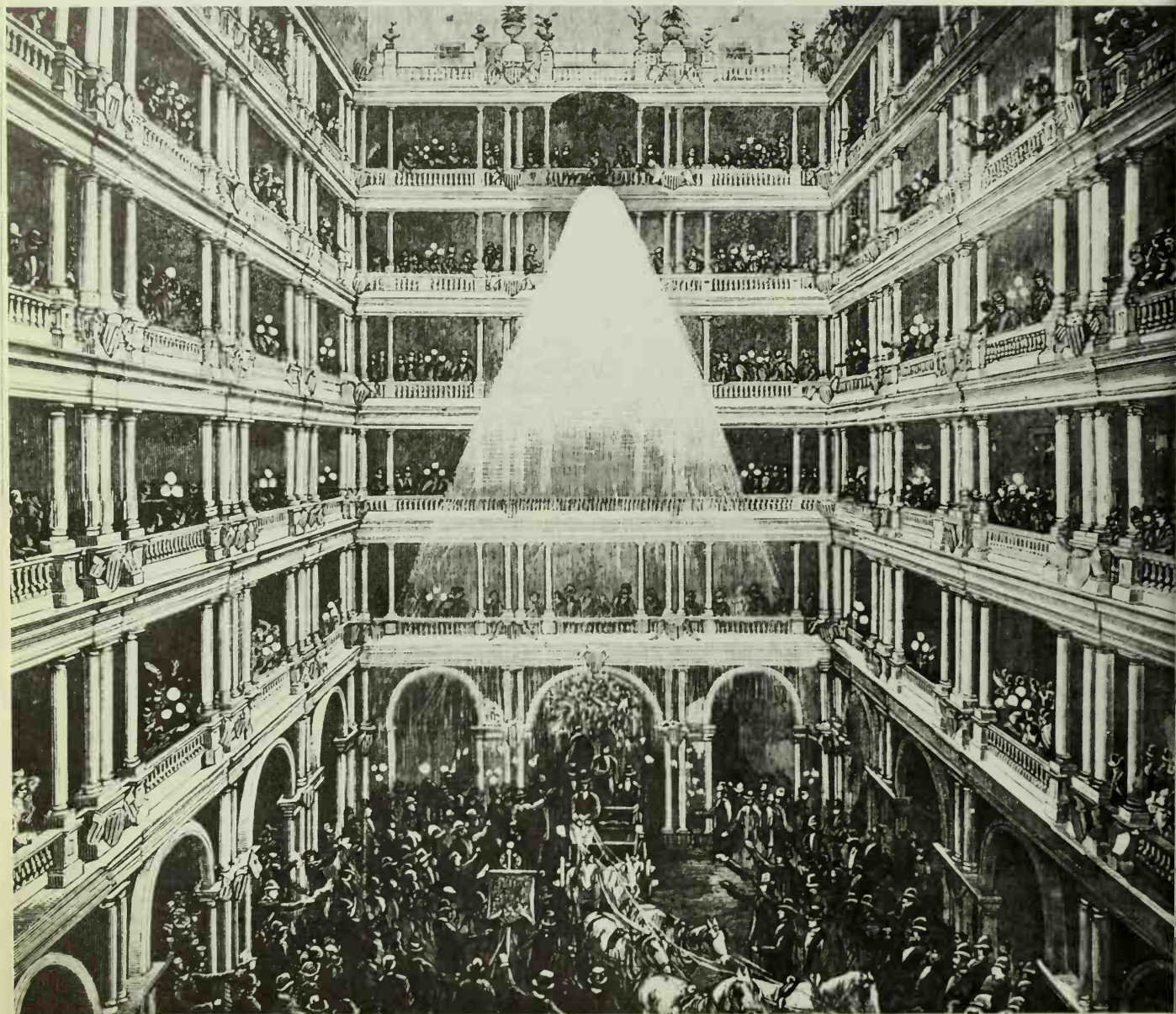
on steam power. Roe also sold more than fifty electric plants for private use in mills, mines, and other industries.

At first Roe's pioneer company faced competition only from private generators in offices or factories. In 1887, the first serious commercial contender appeared on the scene. Mining engineer Augustus J. Bowic headed the Electric Improvement Company, and Fred Sharon of the Palace Hotel family was one of the leading stockholders. Heated competition between the companies ended in 1892 when the challenger sold its San Francisco properties to the California Electric Light Company.

The victor was already engaged in corporate battle, however, with a much more serious contender—the powerful Edison General Electric Company of New York which owned the rights to Edison's patents. In mid-1890, representatives of the J. P. Morgan-backed company arrived in San Francisco to look into the possibility of setting up a rival utility company. Roe reacted quickly to the threat and traveled to New York to negotiate. After nearly a year, an agreement was reached, and the Edison Light and Power Company was incorporated in San Francisco on July 1, 1891. The new company, which held exclusive rights to the Edison patents within a radius of one hundred miles of the city, purchased the California Electric Light Company by an exchange of stock. Roe, who had been manager for twelve years of the firm he founded in 1879, became president of the new company. Its achievement was recognized two years later in the *San Francisco Evening Bulletin* in an article headlined: "Power and Light—Great Plant of the Edison Company An Establishment of Wonderful Magnitude. Its Growth from Small Beginnings to Mammoth Proportions—Magnificent Machinery and Perfected System." The article went on to note that "The Edison Light and Power Company had modest beginnings. It has grown from the acorn to the stately oak. It has rendered great services to San Francisco. . . . The history of its birth and growth is an open book."<sup>25</sup>



*During the gala reception for Ulysses S. Grant at the Palace Hotel in September, 1879, light from 500 gas jets and two carbon arc lamps illuminated the courtyard. An artist sketched this great Palace moment as General Grant rode in state into the Grand Court, his carriage drawn by a team of snow-white horses.*



By the early 1890s, George Roe's tiny California Electric Light Company had become a strong, functioning utility. Roe himself was honored in the San Francisco business and social world and respected as a civic leader and a patron of the arts. His career, however, moved to an untimely end. Late in 1894, he became ill, went to New York City for medical treatment, and died there at the age of forty-two.

Roe's company continued, merging in 1896 with the San Francisco Gas Company to become the San Francisco Gas and Electric Company. It was a cornerstone of today's Northern and Central California combination utility, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, which was incorporated on October 10, 1905.

George Roe was not a glamorous figure in the San Francisco of the 1870s. He displayed neither the flamboyance of Baldwin and Ralston, nor the creative genius of Thomas Edison. But Roe's California Electric Light Company, started with just two generators capable of lighting twenty-one lamps, helped bring about the dawn of the electric age in California and the West. It was Roe's company, opened for business 100 years ago, that evolved into the electric system which today brings light to more than nine million Californians.

The photograph on page 234 is from the California State Library; on pages 236, 240 and 243, the Pacific Gas and Electric Company; on pages 237 and 246, the Bancroft Library. The photographs on pages 239 and 244 are from the CHS Collections.

## Notes

1. "George Henry Roe," *The Builders of A Great City: San Francisco's Representative Men* (San Francisco, 1891), p. 298.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Charles M. Coleman, *PGandE of California* (New York: 1952), p. 51 ff. Coleman's book and research were particularly helpful in the preparation of this article.
4. "Autobiography of Geo. H. Roe" (written about 1890), typed ms. in California Historical Society Library, p. 3.

5. Coleman, *PGandE of California*, p. 10.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.
8. James A. Cox, *A Century of Light* (New York, 1979), p. 26.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Lawrence Kinnaird, *History of the Greater San Francisco Bay Region*, 1 (New York and West Palm Beach, 1966): 497-8.
11. Jerome A. Hart, *In Our Second Century* (San Francisco, 1931), p. 49.
12. "Autobiography of George H. Roe," p. 2. See also "George Henry Roe," *Builders of a Great City*, p. 297, and Coleman, *PGandE of California*, p. 54.
13. *History of the Palace Hotel*, undated, Palace Hotel memorabilia collection California Historical Society Library.
14. Excerpt from *Postscript to San Francisco News Letter*, October 30, 1875, California Historical Society Library.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Kinnaird, *History of Greater S. F. Bay Region*, p. 498.
17. *Extracts from the Scientific American and Other Papers* (Boston: Brush Electric Light Co., Nov. 1, 1881).
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Mining and Scientific Press*, December 14, 1878, quoted in Kinnaird, *History of Greater S.F. Bay Region*, pp. 498-99.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 496.
21. "Home Again. Arrival of the Great Captain. The Bewildering Reception of General Grant at San Francisco," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, October 11, 1879. In this reference to "the greatest of modern inventors," the writer may have confused San Francisco's new Brush arc lights with the well publicized lighting experiments of Thomas Edison in the East. Edison's incandescent light bulb was not available in San Francisco until the early 1880s.
22. Coleman, *PGandE of California*, p. 60.
23. "Home Again," *Leslie's Illustrated*, October 11, 1879.
24. "Autobiography of George H. Roe," p. 5.
25. *San Francisco Evening Bulletin*, June 3, 1893, from newspaper clipping collection in Wells Fargo History Room, San Francisco.



# Pages from the Past—



THE POISON OAK.

THE POISON OAK.

This subject has elicited more attention, and invited more examination than we supposed it probable, when the first article appeared upon it, in this Magazine. Letters upon letters, of inquiry, and for information have poured in upon us; some telling us of its inconvenient and painful effects with its accompanying symptoms; others relating the particular kinds of treatment, which have been successful to them, individually, with a variety of questions as to what it is? how to avoid it? what is a certain cure for it? etc., etc.

To satisfy these inquiries, in some measure, we renew the subject, giving some illustrations of the shrub, and its

effects, in hopes that, although we do not profess to be physician extraordinary, to this class of persons and cases, we may nevertheless diffuse information of value to those affected by it.

For ourselves we may say that we can handle it, and even eat it, with impunity, as it produces no effect whatever upon us; but we regret to say it is not thus with all.

In the early part of last month, we saw a person almost blind from its effects, and with his entire face, and portions of his body, very much discolored and swollen. In this condition he was recommended the "sweating" process, adopted and practiced by Dr. Bourne, the Water Cure physician of this city. The following statement, from Mr. M. Fisher, will distinctly explain itself.

I was poisoned by contact with Poison Oak, February 22d, 1857, at three o'clock, P. M. At ten o'clock, P. M., 24th, my condition was very distressing as shown by the first portrait, then taken, when I was rapidly becoming blind. The second portrait shows my improved state two and a half to three hours later, after a thorough sweating. The third portrait was taken at forty-eight hours later than the first one, and now I am entirely cured of a very severe affection which was rapidly getting worse, and exhibiting its effects all over my person; without medicine or any other than the mode above stated, only three baths. During the year 1858, the Poison Oak caused me partial blindness nearly one month; and total blindness for several days, with much suffering.

Now we give the above, simply to show



EFFECTS OF THE POISON OAK.

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HUTCHINGS' CALIFORNIA MAGAZINE.

that a good sweating, and the drinking freely of cold water, with the application of cloths, saturated with warm water, to the head and face, can be practiced by any one with the greatest safety and efficiency.

"Any mode (says the *Alta*) of taking a vapor bath will do, either by means of steam admitted to a tight box, or by placing the patient under blankets, and heating the water with hot stoves; or other convenient plan, so that it be effectual, and allow the patient's head to be exposed to the air, avoiding the necessity of breathing the hot and vitiated steam.

"From having witnessed its effects, we recommend the foregoing as a simple and efficient process for overcoming this troublesome disorder, to all such as may unfortunately require its aid.

There are some afflicted so severely, as to induce protracted illness, often blindness, and sometimes even death. We have frequently known it to baffle the treatment of physicians for weeks and months, subjecting the patient meantime, to great inconvenience and suffering. We have, therefore, thought it worth while to give the



AFTER A BATH OF THREE HOURS.

public the benefit of a mode of cure, applied in a case that recently came under our own observation; and which seems alike simple, speedy and efficacious."

Some have used gunpowder with effect,—others alcohol,—others strong ley—and who have become cured by rubbing the parts affected, although the "sweating" process seems to us, the most natural.

"I suggest a remedy for the postular eruption," writes a gentleman from Umpqua City, Oregon, "produced by the poison oak:—take sulphate of iron, ten grains; laudanum, half an ounce; water, one ounce—mix and apply to the diseased surface, constantly, by means of soft linen, saturated with the solution. If the eruption is persistent, with sympathetic fever, take salts in aperient doses, and one grain of sulphate of iron, internally."

Too much care cannot be used when riding or walking near this poisonous shrub, especially by those persons who are most easily affected. It is also very desirable that a remedy should be applied as speedily as possible after its effects are first felt,—thus saving much annoyance and inconvenience.



CURED.

## The Poison Oak—Its Cure



## A FEW MORE WORDS ABOUT THE POISON OAK—ITS CURE.

Since the publication, in our last number, of an article on the Poison Oak of California, we have been favored with some additional information concerning it, which we now place before our readers. A correspondent, under the *nom de plume* of "Gold Spring," gives the following:

"I was pleased to see, in the October number, a short notice of the Poison Oak, or *La Yedra*, as the Mexicans call it, and I am anxious to obtain information about it, and also to learn a preventive of its evil effects. I believe that I am as subject to its influence as any person can be, and I perceive that I am infinitely more liable to be affected by it now, than when I first commenced to mine, in 1850. At that time, it was necessary that I should come into actual contact with, and even be scratched by it, in order to be attacked severely; but now, if I work within a few paces of it, and perspire, as one is apt to do in a California summer, I am certain, although exceedingly careful not to touch it, to be badly 'poisoned.'

"The effects, however, are not precisely the same, on me, as on many others. Its first appearance is in the form of small red pimples on my arms or legs, and these soon become watery pustules, which speedily spread over all the most tender parts of my body, as inside my elbows and knees; and, in fact, in every place where the skin, by forming a wrinkle, appears to detain the perspiration. Sometimes it breaks out across my stomach, and then it produces a very unpleasant, sickly feeling gradually. The parts, however,

never swell, which I have attributed to the ease with which it appears to break through the skin. These pustules are exceedingly irritating, and, when scratched, which it is almost impossible to avoid doing, become very painful. The eruption, if left to itself, usually continues for about a week, when it gradually subsides—sometimes, however, leaving a memento of its passage in the shape of boils, which break out here and there over the affected parts. I forgot to say that the pustules are sometimes so thick as to produce the appearance of a severe, blistered scald, and the discharge of aqueous matter so great that I have had a pocket handkerchief which I tied round my arm, wet through several folds by it.

"As for its cure, almost every one has a different specific, although the most favored appears to be salt and water. I have tried almost everything I could hear of—salt, gunpowder, carbonate of soda, sugar of lead, and many others, with various success, but have never been able to cure it under three or four days; and then, when I resumed work, found myself just as subject to it as ever. I have also tried decoctions of various plants, in order to find an immediate remedy, but without avail. I am rather opposed to the use of any such violent specifics as those above named, as I think they are very apt to produce internal sickness. I am inclined to the opinion that, where convenient, frequent bathings with water, as hot as can be borne, is about the best treatment. Some light aperient may be taken at the same time. A solution of acetate of lead, with some drops of laudanum in it, is, however, tolerably

effective. I think, however, that it is with this, as with other ailments; that, as it affects differently constituted persons variously, so it is differently cured. I have known some people who have used salt and water with great effect, although it produced none on me. By the way, I have observed that persons of a light complexion are much more easily affected by it than dark ones. Is this also the result of your experience?

"I should be very much pleased if some of your readers would throw a little more light on the subject of curing or preventing the evil effects of *La Yedra*, for I am so annoyed by it when mining as to have christened it 'mine enemy,' believing it to be the only one I have in the country."

Gold Spring's letter is one of the many instances of the good effect of disseminating information of local interest. We quote his favor, and hope that it will be an example to our readers, of communicating any intelligence that may tend to benefit our community. We are glad to see that he recommends caution in the use of external applications, as we are yet unacquainted with the whole of its symptoms.

Some have suggested constant rubbing with ice, or bathing in ice-water; but we would by no means recommend it; applications similar to those in use for other poisons of like appearance are safest.

Since our last, we have submitted its leaf to a powerful microscope, but can discover none of the *fibræ hamæ* of the sting-nettle. We observed that its leaf is much charged with succulence, of less consistency than that of the oak,

to which it bears some resemblance. We have seen a person who declares that he has frequently swallowed some of its juice, after mastication, with impunity, but are inclined to attach little importance to this knowledge, as, from the time of old Homer, who, in the fourth book of his *Iliad*, records of Macaon, the son of *Æsculapius*—

"Then, when he saw the wound, where the poison'd arrow fell,  
Having suck'd out the blood, applied with art  
that remedy  
The prudent Chiron gave to his beloved father;"

and of Eleanor, the wife of the English king, Edward I, who sucked the virus from the wound made by a poisoned arrow, and so saved her husband's life at the hazard of her own, it has been well known that many poisons may be imbibed harmless, which would cause death if externally applied, and *vice versa* of others.

From the effects of this poison, a gentleman with whom we are very well acquainted, was entirely blind for six weeks, his head having swollen to an enormous size; and, in addition to his distressingly painful condition, was much afraid that it would become fatal in its consequences. Many of the usual remedies, superintended by a skillful physician, were useless and unavailing, until a friend, while visiting him, suggested the use of the *soap root*, so common throughout California. This was tried with eminent success; for in three days after its application he was able to resume his business. As nearly every one throughout California is familiar with this root, we need only add that it was used in the same manner as common soap.

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## "The Church is beginning to crumble"—

### A DOMINICAN DOCUMENT FROM BAJA CALIFORNIA IN 1808

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Since founded in 1215 by Domingo de Guzmán, the Order of Preachers has diligently sought to make the world its cell and the ocean its cloister. Entering the New World in 1510, the Dominicans, as they are known, settled on Española, a small island in the Caribbean Sea, to begin an unparalleled humanitarian campaign on behalf of the region's native peoples. Pedro de Córdova, Antonio de Montesinos, Bartolomé de Las Casas, and Luis Cáncer are only a few who threw themselves wholeheartedly into the task of advancing the spiritual and material welfare of the Indian population.

In practically every corner of the two American continents penetrated by Spain, the Order of Preachers labored with distinction. As early as 1526, they moved from the Caribbean islands to preach the Gospel within the present borders of the continental United States, possibly with Ponce de León in 1513 and assuredly with Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón in 1526.

While never as influential in New Spain as the Franciscans, the Order of Preachers worked with singular success. Their missionary foundations in Oaxaca, for example, were considered outstanding models of evangelic accomplishment. The Dominicans were also the first group to gain a successful foothold in the Sierra Gorda region where, by the close of the seventeenth

century, they maintained six flourishing missions.

On April 7, 1772, the Dominicans were officially entrusted with all the Jesuit foundations in Peninsular California, as well as the recently-founded frontier establishment of San Fernando de Velicatá. Actual transfer of authority took place in mid-1773, when the last of the Franciscans departed for their new apostolate in Alta or Upper California. A territory of immense proportions, it included what one writer aptly called "the decadent area south of Velicatá and the virgin territory north."<sup>1</sup>

The Dominican presence in Baja California lasted for the next eighty years,<sup>2</sup> during which time the friars established eight new missions. Between 1772 and 1854, fourteen Dominicans occupied the office of *presidente*.<sup>3</sup>

After 1804, when the peninsula was politically severed from Alta California, the fortunes of missionary work in the area were irrevocably altered. Initially, the region's isolation beneficially insulated it from many of the vexations confronting the mainland, but time eventually caught up with Baja California and placed insurmountable obstacles in the path of the friars.

Very little is known and even less has been published about the ecclesial life of Peninsular California during the nineteenth century. According to Father Zephyrin Engelhardt, "The fault lies with the Dominicans themselves, who either failed to record interesting events and incidents, or allowed the documents to go astray."<sup>4</sup> Materials unearthed in recent years, however, indicate

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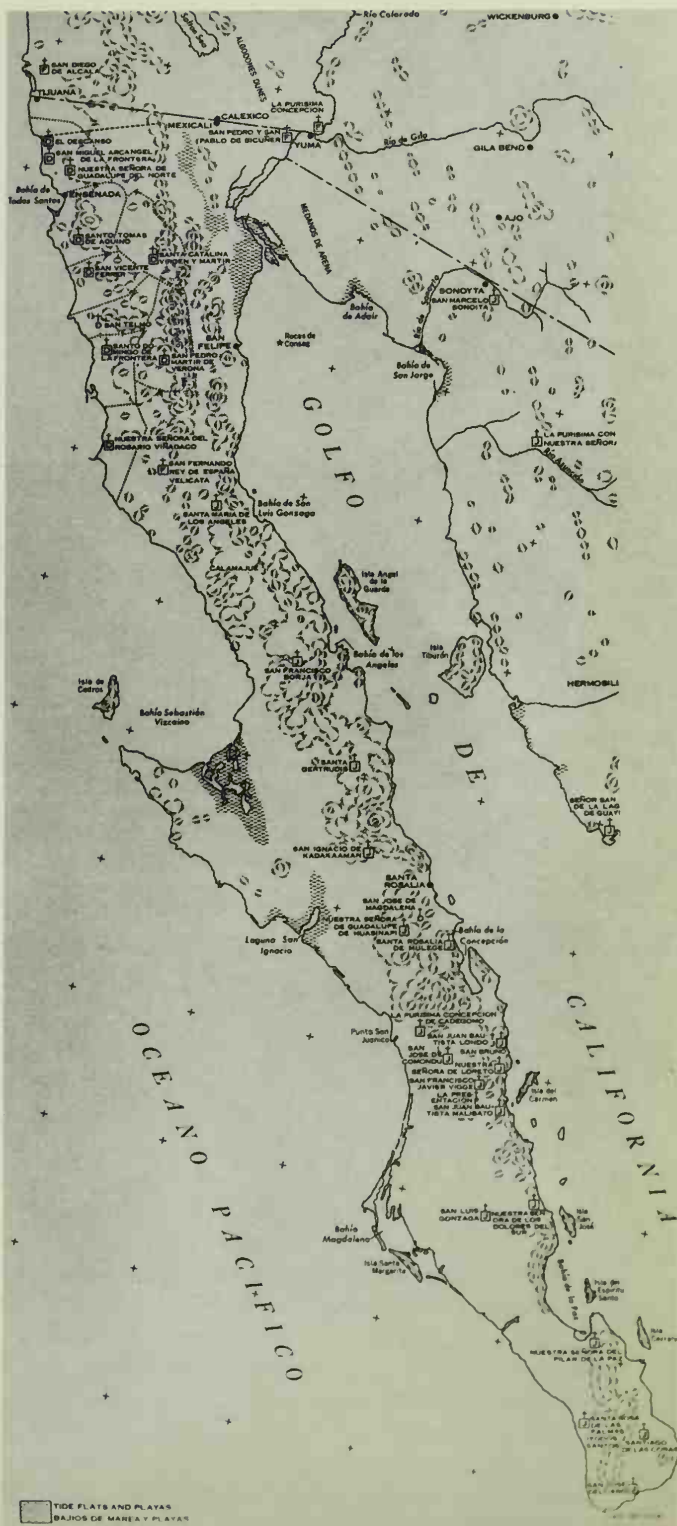
Rev. Francis J. Weber, Archivist of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, is a prolific author and editor of books and articles about Catholicism in the West.

that Father Engelhardt may have been unduly harsh on the Order of Preachers.

Recently emerging from the shadows is an archival treasure which sheds light on this subject. It is a packet of materials dated from 1808 to 1818 which found its way into the collection of Western Americana manuscripts gathered by the late Frederick W. Beinicke for the Yale University Library.<sup>5</sup> Among the documents is a fascinating and informative plea for financial assistance addressed to the prior and vicar general for the Order of Preachers, Father Alexander Fernández.<sup>6</sup> In the eleven-page document written at Loreto on December 23, 1808, Father Ramon López,<sup>7</sup> president for the Dominican Missions in Baja California, provides a rare glimpse into the vicissitudes that plagued the peninsular outposts. It is herein translated and annotated for the first time.

Other correspondence in the packet indicates that the report was sent through the office of the Dominican procurator, Father Juan Rivas, to Fernández, who was residing at the Convento de Santo Domingo in Mexico City. Upon receiving the letter, the vicar general wrote a covering note<sup>8</sup> endorsing the proposal which he sent, along with the original plea, directly to Viceroy Pedro Garibay.<sup>9</sup> Unknown is the ultimate disposition of the request from the *presidente*, although it seemingly unleashed a raft of complaints and countercharges that continued for another decade.

While the Dominican missionary efforts in Peninsular California were considerably less productive and surely less dramatic than the *padres'* exploits in other areas of the New World, scant but emerging records show, as one historian has written, that the self-sacrificing friars "labored as effectually for the Indians, and accomplished as much good for religion, as either the Jesuits or the Franciscans. And these fruitful labors the friars of St. Dominic continued until they were deprived of all means of subsistence, and were forced to leave the country by the destructive secularization measures of the past century."<sup>10</sup>





M. R. P. Fr. Juan Ruiz, Presbitero de la Misión de Loreto.  
Calif.

A nro. m. R. P. Padre Vicario Genl. Fr. Alexan-  
dro Fernandez, prometido en oficio de 7 de Nov. que si  
noliese, q. en el Loreto inmediato, ha un puerro, a un  
P. m. R. por conducto de V. q. no podia ser q. el  
fuese de esta estension de la Cruz. Calif. se man-  
tubiese en este Presidio de Loreto, con sus aines y en  
carga q. se impondria alai estension; y no lo ha-  
ce porq. me lo impidieron varias ocupaciones, que  
era precaria la atencion de dlla, pero ahora lo-  
trago aunque con mucho trabajo, hurtando esti-  
empo, a otras que me q. dan alguna espera.

De ninguna manera me parece q. lo ha-  
re mejor, q. al presente me parece y sencillamente  
el Estado de la Iglesia, y Colegio de este Presidio, y el  
de nra. estension, porq. de la manifestacion vera  
de ra de el, se concluya q. no es posible q. con  
dho. 300 p. su aine con otras tantas mas, pueda re-  
novar dha. Iglesia y Colegio, reemplazarse de lo  
q. precisam. necesitan, y aun mismo tiempo  
mantenerse un P. Presb. y un P. m. R. q. lo  
necesaria aquel indispensable y q. se sea su-

December 23, 1808  
Loreto

Last November 7, I solemnly promised the Very Reverend  
Vicar General, Father Alexander Fernandez, that I would  
send him by mail, through your kind offices, a plea on behalf  
of the Presidente of the Missions in Peninsular California,  
who finds it impossible any longer to sustain himself at this  
Presidio of Loreto with the 300 pesos he receives as support.  
I have hesitated only because of other pressing matters which  
demanded my immediate attention. Now, I briefly put aside all  
my other obligations long enough to make this presentation.

There is no more effective manner in pleading my cause  
than to describe the status of the church and presbytery at this  
Presidio, as well as conditions in the other missionary foun-  
dations. It will be easy enough to see that it would be im-  
practical to expect these buildings to be repaired with another  
300 pesos, or even double that amount, as long as it is also  
necessary to support the Presidente and his assistant priest  
from the same allocation.

The situation here presently is thus: The entire church  
building,<sup>1</sup> the nave, chapel of the Holy Rosary, choirloft,

1. Dating from 1793, the church at Loreto was once richly decorated.

sacristy, and tower are all badly worn, dilapidated and beginning to crumble on both the inside and the outside. The doors are in pieces. Only two of the six bells are usable. The altarpieces, five in the church and one in the chapel, are all broken, unglued and falling from their frames. Some of the altar tables are disintegrating too and everyone of them, except for the main altar, lacks such basic adornments for the worthy celebration of the Liturgy as antependia, altarcloths, crucifixes, candlesticks and bookstands. When Holy Mass is occasionally celebrated at any one of these altars, it is necessary to remove these items from the main altar, on which the Blessed Sacrament reposes. And that is surely disrespectful to the Lord. In the sacristy, only the clothespress is usable—probably because there is so little traffic there. Everything in the sacristy is in poor condition.

The rag-like copes can be somewhat repaired, except for their length. There are many chasubles and other vestments which should be burned. While there are enough vestments for offering Holy Mass, most all of them need considerable mending, especially the linens, most of which need replacement. There are two fairly new albs, but unfortunately, the lace on each is badly worn. The other albs are threadbare, but they should last for a while longer. The same is true for the amices, corporals, purificators and finger towels. There are quite a few of these last items, perhaps six complete sets. The altarcloths are virtually useless, as are the antependia. There are a few broken and ravelling cinctures, one of which is still used everyday. There are no hand towels, finger dishes or lecturns, to say nothing of the other instruments for the administration of the sacraments. There are enough sacred vessels, but even they need attention.

The sacristan of the church is retired from the Royal Navy. There are a few altar boys who enjoy participating in the liturgical ceremonies. Holy Mass is offered and certain other services are conducted for those wishing to attend.

The condition of the presbytery<sup>2</sup> is even more deplorable than the church. It is in a state of physical collapse and, in many places, unroofed. Those of us who live here are constantly in

danger from falling tiles. Very little is functional, except for the doors, hinges and the like which I have repaired from my own personal funds. The furnishings consist of three or four paintings, two reasonably-good tables, a couple of old bookcases, some few books, a silver dish, one serving spoon and five utensils. There are a few chairs, some wardrobes and one or another small thing of scant value.

The rancho attached to the mission at Comondú, which my predecessor<sup>3</sup> acquired, should be of some worth. Formerly, it provided a bit of revenue, but in more recent times it has deteriorated and now needs a considerable investment to restore its productivity. Presently I can make no use of it, though I will hold title to it until an appraisal can be made.

This foundation owes the Royal Warehouse 716 pesos, four reales and a little more and there is a personal indebtedness of six pesos and four reales contracted by my predecessor. I feel these debts should be paid by the missions and in this I concur with my predecessor who considered these as legitimate expenses incurred in executing the office of *Presidente*. These are some of the manifold problems which I have yet to resolve, with the help of God.

After mentioning the status of the church and presbytery here, let me now address myself to the other foundations. This I will do in cursory fashion, beginning with San Miguel, the northernmost mission and concluding with the outpost of San José del Cabo in the south.

Conditions at San Miguel<sup>4</sup> are not very good. While outwardly prosperous, its minister can barely provide the *Presidente* with twenty-five or thirty pesos annually. I know quite well that the priest there can hardly meet his own needs.

The Mission of Santo Tomás<sup>5</sup> is better off. Yet even though that foundation excels those on the frontier, when I look at the

3. Father Miguel Gallego, the former vicar provincial and *Presidente*, had served at San Vicente Ferrer (1789-1794), San Francisco de Javier (1794), Nuestra Señora de Loreto (1795), and Santa Rosalia de Mulegé (1795-1798). He became *Presidente* in 1804. The venerable Dominican died at Loreto from a sudden illness on January 2, 1810.

4. Founded in 1787, Mission San Miguel Arcángel was located in an isolated area about fifty miles south of San Diego.

5. A new church had been completed at San Tomás de Aquino in 1801, along with a shelter for young girls and unmarried women. Its foundation in 1791 completed the projected line of communications between the two Californias.

2. It was a small house, which contained a *sala* or reception room and another larger room divided into several sections.

list of its current expenditures and then anticipate what is needed for the immediate future, I can see that there will be precious little left over. Hence that establishment must be classified with San Miguel.

The Mission of San Vicente<sup>6</sup> which, until recently, I administered for twelve years, remains much as when I departed. It is about the same as those already mentioned. It is not at all likely that my successor<sup>7</sup> there will be able to maintain the twenty-five or thirty pesos formerly paid each year to the Presidente.

The mission dedicated to our holy founder, Santo Domingo,<sup>8</sup> is in even worse condition financially than that of San Vicente. At most it is barely subsisting. Nevertheless, I will ask the minister there to at least try to meet a tax of twenty-five or thirty pesos to the Presidente.

The foundation of Santísimo Rosario<sup>9</sup> can contribute a little more. Though it has neither good ranches nor many cattle, the friars<sup>10</sup> have carefully managed in the past decade to support themselves and to put something aside.

The Mission of San Fernando<sup>11</sup> can give nothing because of a long series of unfortunate occurrences. It is akin to a very old man who lives on a day-to-day basis, until a lack of strength finally curtails his activity altogether.

The two missions in the hills, Santa Catalina<sup>12</sup> and San Pedro<sup>13</sup> cannot give what they don't have. The minister at Santa Catalina formerly was able to send something, but now he struggles just to make ends meet. San Pedro is good for little more and likely will always be that way. A lot more

could be said about those missions in another context.

The Mission of San Borja<sup>14</sup> is anything but prosperous, but I would think the friar there could contribute a minimal sum to the support of the Presidente.

The same cannot be said for Santa Gertrudis,<sup>15</sup> which manages to exist solely through the kindness of Divine Providence.

The Mission of San Ignacio,<sup>16</sup> although it has seen hard times, now appears to be doing better. It can be grouped among those able to bear some taxation.

Mission La Purísima<sup>17</sup> can likewise be put in that category, since it is among the more stable foundations.

Nothing can realistically be expected from the Missions of Mulegé,<sup>18</sup> Comondú<sup>19</sup> and San Javier,<sup>20</sup> all of which are on their last breaths.

As for the southern missions of Todos Santos<sup>21</sup> and San José del Cabo<sup>22</sup> and the last one that belongs to the Dominicans,<sup>23</sup> I have only a limited acquaintance. But since they are still operational and are surrounded by mining interests,<sup>24</sup> I would assume they could manage some form of taxation for the maintenance of the Presidente.

In this sad state of affairs, which relies entirely on Divine Providence for temporalities, I can only conclude, after a

14. Established by the Society of Jesus in 1762, San Francisco de Borja had formerly been the most populous of the missions in Peninsular California.

15. Dating from 1752, the Mission of Santa Gertrudis was situated in an isolated ravine in the heart of a mountain area twenty-six miles from San Ignacio. The church was still in very good condition.

16. The origins of San Ignacio de Kadakaaman can be traced to 1727. It was one of the "mountain missions".

17. Purísima Concepción, founded in 1720, was located along the banks of the Cadegomó River.

18. The church at Santa Rosalia de Mulegé was in fairly good condition, but the rest of the buildings were rapidly disintegrating.

19. A stone church was located west of Loreto at San José de Comondú about midway between the gulf and the Pacific.

20. Father Gerónimo Soldevilla was then stationed at San Francisco de Javier.

21. Perched upon a high and picturesque mountain, Todos Santos also boasted a chapel, Our Lady of the Holy Rosary.

22. San José del Cabo was the first of the peninsular establishments begun in the south. It was located near an inlet anchorage frequented by foreign ships.

23. Presumably the reference is to Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, which was actually an *estancia* or cattle ranch until 1834. Father Rafael Arviña was the resident priest.

24. Such mining towns were San Antonio, once the capital of Baja California, and El Triunfo, at one time the largest city in the southern part of the peninsula.

6. Ideally situated on a large plain with abundant grass, marshes, water, and arable land, San Vicente Ferrer was the only Dominican mission not eventually relocated.

7. Vg. Father José Duro.

8. A severe epidemic in 1801 had killed many of the Indians at Santo Domingo.

9. Nuestra Señora del Santísimo Rosario, established in 1774, was the first Indian missionary outpost of the Dominicans in Baja California. Eventually it became the most stable and prosperous.

10. Father José Caulas was then stationed at the mission.

11. Situated along the thirtieth parallel at the northern limit of the San Borja desert, San Fernando de Velicatá was the only mission founded under Franciscan auspices in Peninsular California.

12. Santa Catalina, begun in 1797, was the last of the Dominican establishments in Baja California and the only one not built in a valley. Father Manuel de Aguila was the resident missionary.

13. A new church had been erected at the mile-high Mission of San Pedro Martir de Verona in 1801.



thorough examination of conscience and a great deal of reflection, that the only feasible way of carrying on the office of Presidente is to have the Royal Treasury pay his salary. He would need 700 pesos annually, over and beyond the 350 pesos he receives as a minister. That amount, added to the 100 pesos he may realize from taxation and what little comes as offerings and stipendia, would enable the Presidente to support himself and his companion and to make the more necessary repairs to the church and presbytery.

This proposal should not be looked upon as unique or strange. The Presidio here numbers upwards of 700 souls between the militia, sailors, royal officials and neighbors. That estimate does not include prisoners or the many visitors that arrive here with ever-greater frequency. There is a real need for a parish church staffed with self-supported priests. Also, I feel that the already poverty-stricken missions should not be expected to bear the total or even predominate expenses of this foundation as its resident ministers.

If the Presidio here were located nearer to a mission, like those in Alta California, possibly other arrangements could be made for its temporalities.<sup>25</sup> In that case, maybe one priest would suffice, if there were two in the adjoining mission.

25. The question of providing chaplains for the four presidios in Alta California was a constant source of friction between civil and religious leaders throughout the missionary era.

The Peninsular California Missions in 1808  
as described by Father Ramón López

Missionary Foundation	Order	Founded— Abandoned
Nuestra Señora de Loreto	Jesuit	1697-1822
San Miguel Arcángel	Dominican	1787-1834
San Tomás de Aquino	Dominican	1791-1849
San Vicente Ferrer	Dominican	1780-1833
Santo Domingo	Dominican	1775-1839
Nuestra Señora del Rosario	Dominican	1774-1832
San Fernando de Velicatá	Franciscan	1769-
Santa Catalina	Dominican	1797-1840
San Pedro Martir de Verona	Dominican	1794-1806
San Francisco de Borja	Jesuit	1762-1818
Santa Gertrudis	Jesuit	1752-1822
San Ignacio de Kadakaaman	Jesuit	1727-1840
Purísima Concepción de Cadegomó	Jesuit	1720-1822
Santa Rosalía de Mulegé	Jesuit	1705-1828
San José de Comondú	Jesuit	1708-1827
San Francisco de Javier	Jesuit	1699-1817
Todos Santos	Jesuit	1724-
San José del Cabo	Jesuit	1730-1840
Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe	Dominican	1834-1840

However, this foundation is eight leagues distant from the nearest mission and therefore unable to exist with a single minister.

I have endeavored here to propose what is needed, along with sufficient evidence to prove its validity. This I do in eager anticipation of your favorable reaction.

May Our Lord continue to bless you.

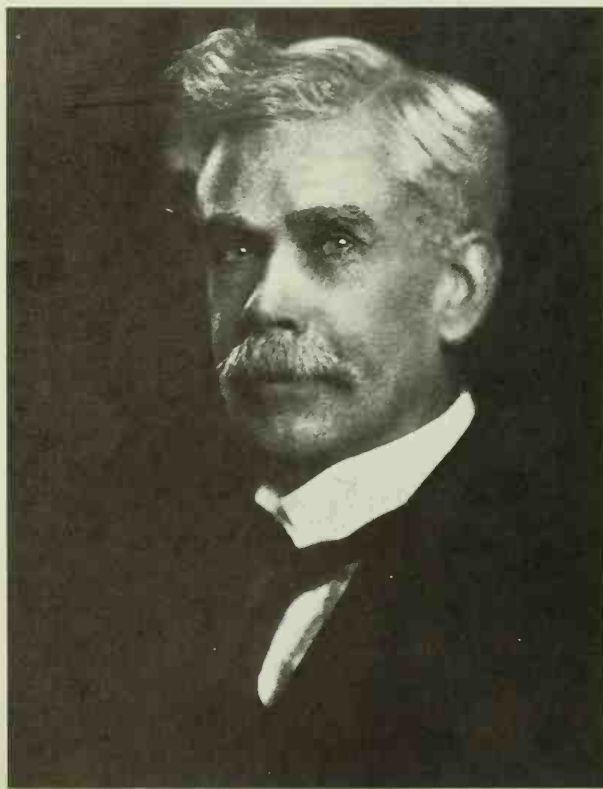
The manuscript is reproduced through the courtesy of the Beinecke Rare Book Room and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven. The map is from W. Michael Mathes, *The Missions of Baja California, 1683-1849, An Historical-Photographic Survey* (La Paz, Baja California, 1977).

## Notes

1. Peveril Meigs, *The Dominican Mission Frontier of Lower California* (Berkeley, 1935), p. 5.
2. For an historical sketch of Dominican activity, see Francis J. Weber, *The Missions and Missionaries of Baja California* (Los Angeles, 1968), pp. 53-65.
3. The men were Vicente Mora (1773-1781), Miguel Hidalgo (1781-1790), Crisóstomo Gomez (1790-1793), Cajetano Pallás (1793-1798), Vicente Belda (1798-1802), Rafael Arviña (1802-1804), Miguel Gallego (1804-1808), Ramón López (1808-1816), Pedro González (1816-1819), Pablo Zúcate (1819-1820), José Sanchez (1820-1822), Pedro González (1822-1825), Félix Caballero (1825-1840), and Gabriel González (1840-1854).
4. Zephyrin Engelhardt, *The Missions and Missionaries of California* (San Francisco, 1929), I: 631.
5. The compiler thanks Dr. Archibald Hanna, curator of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, at Yale University, for permission to reproduce this precious document.
6. This entry is number 130 in Jeanne M. Goddard and Charles Kritzler, eds., *A Catalogue of the Frederick W. & Carrie S. Beinicke Collection of Western Americana* (New Haven, 1965), I: 39-40.
7. Ramón López (c. 1775-1816) was a veteran missionary by the time of his appointment to the presidency in 1808. His longest previous term of service had been at San Vicente Ferrer, where he labored from 1797 to 1808. Father López was known to have visited Mission San Diego during November, 1798, in his quest for souls. He died on June 10, 1816.
8. Alexander Fernández, O.P., to Pedro Garibay, Mexico City, February 27, 1809, The Frederick W. & Carrie S. Beinicke Collection, Yale University.
9. Pedro Garibay (1727-1815) was among the more prominent of New Spain's viceroys.
10. Peter K. Guilday, "Notes and Comments," *Catholic Historical Review* III (January, 1918): 495.

## Jackson Ralston and the Last Single Tax Campaign

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*An ardent single-taxer all his life, Ralston and other committee members petitioned Henry George, "editor and proprietor" of The Standard, to call a national meeting of the land-tax reformers.*

Not always have Californians provided fertile soil for reform movements, despite Lord Bryce's dictum that the state's inhabitants are "so impatient of the slow approach of the millennium that they are ready to try instant, even if perilous remedies for present evils."<sup>1</sup> To the contrary, Californians have often rejected radical reforms albeit after tantalizing flirtation with new ideas. A case in point is the "single tax" movement. Initiated by Henry George in California with the publication in 1879 of his provocative treatise, *Progress and Poverty*, single taxers sought to readjust economic wealth by curbing land monopoly and speculation through a single tax on land value. Passionately committed to this path to economic equality, a handful of dedicated Georgists kept (and keep) the single tax a live issue in California long after its vigor had waned in the rest of the country. Foremost among these latter-day reformers was Jackson H. Ralston.

Although he never occupied a bench, "Judge" Ralston, as he was known, spent many years as a lawyer in Washington, D.C. In 1924 at the age of sixty-seven, he retired to the town of Palo Alto in his native California. During the national economic depression of the 1930s, the aging warrior led a statewide struggle for adoption of a ballot initiative measure providing for limited land-value taxation. From 1932 to 1938, this "Ralston Amendment" vied for public attention and support with other reform measures of the day, including Upton Sinclair's End Poverty in California (EPIC), the Townsend Plan, and Technocracy.

Ralston's entire career seemed a prelude to this campaign, for he boasted a distinguished record as a fighter for unpopular causes. Born in Sacramento in 1857, Ralston was the son of a lawyer whose unfortunate wanderlust carried him first to the gold fields of California and then to the mines of Nevada.<sup>2</sup> In 1862 his

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mother, the literary-minded daughter of a New York minister, found herself widowed with two children in Austin, Nevada. Accordingly, she betook herself East to give her son the advantages of a genteel if impecunious upbringing in Oyster Bay and Ithaca, New York, and finally Washington, D.C. Although the young Ralston received little formal education, he regarded this circumstance as a blessing that enabled him to preserve his lifelong independence of thought. Apprenticing himself to a printer at the age of fourteen, he worked as a journeyman compositor in the Government Printing Office for five years. Rising rapidly in the International Typographical Union, he had himself, at the age of twenty-one, appointed as a union delegate to the Paris Exposition of 1878.

Meanwhile, Ralston studied law in night school and moved in circles uncommon for a government typesetter. His future wife, Sara Rankin, he met at the home of Supreme Court Associate Justice Samuel Miller. In 1882 the young Ralston joined a law partnership in Washington, where he remained for forty-two years, and gained considerable eminence as a jurist.

The chief business of Ralston's law firm was the searching of land titles. This brought him into contact with what was then known as the "land question." He also met the socioeconomist Henry George. George, whose influential book *Progress and Poverty* was first published in San Francisco in 1879, had abandoned his job as a printer in San Francisco for a worldwide lecture tour to advance his single tax program. Hearing "the sage of San Francisco" address a labor union audience in Washington, the young Ralston afterward sought an interview with him. This meeting, in concert with Ralston's own legal work, confirmed in him the importance of "right use of land." Years later Ralston was to write, "Wealth seemed of little moment alongside even the small contribution I might hope to make toward furthering a great reform."<sup>3</sup>

Too pragmatic to become a single-tax millennialist,

Ralston was nevertheless profoundly convinced that land monopoly was a great evil. Society would benefit, he believed, to the extent that it inhibited the private accrual of economic gain from socially conferred increases in land values. Acting on his ardent beliefs, Ralston joined other young reformers in the 1890s seeking to implement the single tax. In Hyattsville, Maryland, the town where he lived, Ralston succeeded in having himself and two colleagues elected to the Board of Commissioners. Holding a majority on the board, they proceeded to lift all personal property and land improvement taxes and to raise the tax rate on land from 15 to 25 cents per \$100 valuation. For a year Hyattsville, whose population was evenly divided on the issue, gained national attention by its "single tax" takeover. Then opponents succeeded in having a state court declare the venture "economically unsound," and the town reverted to its conventional tax system. Blocked in Maryland, the same group of single taxers under Ralston's leadership attempted to win a majority of the thirty seats in Delaware's legislature. The disappointing election result turned Ralston away from politics and ended his youthful affiliation with the Republican party.

Not surprisingly, the legal interests of the inquiring young Ralston broadened far beyond the land question. Gaining a measure of prominence as a labor lawyer and champion of civil rights, Ralston became an attorney for the American Federation of Labor as well as a close friend and personal attorney to its founder, Samuel Gompers. For seven years, he defended Gompers against the Buck's Stove and Range Company of St. Louis and finally won dismissal of a sentence for contempt of court.<sup>4</sup>

A longtime champion of the downtrodden, Ralston was first drawn into the field of civil rights in 1894 when remnants of Coxey's Army routed from the nation's capital encamped on the outskirts of Hyattsville. Local authorities persisted in arresting the "soldiers" until Ralston entered pleas for their release, an act which incidentally brought upon him his neighbors' wrath.





# Jackson H. Ralston

## DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE FOR CONGRESS FROM THE FIFTH MARYLAND DISTRICT

**Election: Tuesday, November 7, 1916**

**HYATTSVILLE,  
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY,  
MARYLAND**



**As a boy Printer by Trade; Lawyer by Profession.**

**Took to Hague Peace Court first case tried by it—that of United States vs. Mexico—and won it. Umpire of Italian-Venezuelan Mixed Claims Commission in 1903, passing on millions of dollars in claims against Venezuela.**

**Author of "Venezuelan Arbitrations of 1903," "International Arbitral Law and Procedure" and other works.**

**Attorney for American Federation of Labor in Buck's Stove case, acquitting Gompers, Mitchell and Morrison of charges of contempt.**

**Joint author of Referendum Constitutional Amendment of Maryland, adopted in 1915.**

**Author of present Federal Employers' Liability Act.**

During the Palmer arrests of the 1920s, Ralston again defended victims and participated with Felix Frankfurter and Roscoe Pound in the Popular Government League panel which sought to end the Red Scare and its abuses of civil liberties.<sup>5</sup>

Ralston gained his greatest distinction, however, in the field of international law. In 1897, Senator William M. Stewart of California asked Ralston to pursue the claims by two California Catholic dioceses to a portion of a Jesuit fund which had been in dispute since California parted from Mexico in 1846. Because the Pious Fund, as it was known, had been confiscated by the Mexican government, Ralston urged that the dioceses had a legitimate case against Mexico which should be referred to the newly formed International Court of Arbitration at The Hague in the Netherlands. As a result, the Pious Fund case became the first international dispute to be arbitrated by the international tribunal.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, the Pious Fund case brought Ralston to the attention of the United States Department of State. Promptly nominated a referee in the claims dispute between Italy and Venezuela, Ralston sat as president of the international tribunal when it resolved this case

which was the second submitted to the international court.<sup>7</sup> Upon his return from Venezuela, he was warmly congratulated by President Theodore Roosevelt for his success. Subsequently, Ralston became an acknowledged authority on international arbitration law and the author of textbooks in the field.<sup>8</sup>

Looking back in 1924 at a full life, Ralston decided to retire from law practice, because his hopes for appointment to a federal judgeship seemed increasingly futile with the Republican party firmly entrenched in power. On the urging of his friend David Starr Jordan, Ralston selected Palo Alto as his place of retirement. Financially secure though far from wealthy, he and his wife lived quietly and comfortably for ten years in the academic atmosphere of the Stanford University community. Even with the advent of the depression, their lives were little affected. In fact they were in Europe on one of their periodic visits when the signal event occurred which ended their tranquil retirement.

This pivotal incident was the hasty adoption in 1933 by the California legislature and electorate of the fiscal reorganization plan known as the Riley-Stewart Amendment. Billed by the conservative James Rolfe

*Ralston's 1916 campaign card as the Democratic candidate for congressman from Maryland listed his principles and accomplishments.*

administration as an emergency measure necessary to stem the drain on the state treasury, the Riley-Stewart Amendment granted tax relief to hard-pressed property owners and enabled the legislature to shift the burden of state revenue-gathering to sales and income taxes. Hearing about passage of the amendment, Ralston returned home incensed that California's officials had moved to join the growing ranks of states turning to the regressive sales tax. The tax, Ralston believed, would fall most heavily upon the small property holder whom it was supposed to assist, while owners of vast tracts and properties with lucrative site values stood to benefit enormously from the tax. The principles of Henry George seemed never to have been so clearly at work. Believing that the public would find the proposed sales tax repugnant, Ralston resolved to present California voters with an initiative measure which would replace the sales tax with a tax on land values. Traveling to San Diego, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, Judge Ralston accordingly called upon old-timers in the single tax organizations to launch an effort to place an initiative measure on the ballot.

Use of the initiative was by no means novel to advocates of the single tax. Since the first initiative election in California in 1912, no reform group except the Prohibition party had made more sustained use of the initiative process. From 1912 to 1922, the California single tax organizations had succeeded in qualifying a ballot measure at every biennial election. Vigorous and well-led, the organizations mustered significant ballot support, but as the years passed and as the affirmative vote dropped steadily from 40 to less than 20 percent, the wording of the ballot proposals had become increasingly radical. Dissension over strategies and the nature of the ballot proposals riddled the single tax organizations, and after

the 1922 election, the Single Tax League of Southern California aborted the coalition, refusing to support any further initiative efforts. Instead, the Southern California group decided to concentrate on educating the public on the issue. The more aggressive San Francisco organization, which under the generalship of the legendary Luke North labeled itself the Great Adventure League, clung to a "now-or-never, all-or-nothing" philosophy but failed to marshal enough petition signatures for another ballot proposal. Ironically, Jackson Ralston, at home in Washington in 1923, declared his sympathies with the moderate single taxers of Southern California. Quietly, the single tax issue disappeared from the political scene in California as it had earlier in the rest of the nation.

A decade later, however, when the California legislature moved in July, 1933, to implement the Riley-Stewart Amendment with a 2½ percent retail sales tax, Judge Ralston had already launched his campaign for the amendment's repeal. Popular opposition to the new tax ran strong, for consumers resented its inconvenience as much as its hardship, while retailers chafed at becoming tax collectors for the state. Accordingly, single taxers generally agreed that the time was right for a new assault which would couple their land-tax reform plan with repeal of the sales tax. By exercising some delicacy, Ralston succeeded in reuniting the single tax groups of Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco behind a ballot proposal which he himself drafted.

Carefully worded and crafted for the widest possible appeal, the Ralston Amendment was a moderate proposal which repealed the sales tax and prohibited similar levies in the future. As well, it provided for an immediate \$1000 property-tax exemption on improvements and personal property and for a gradual elimination of these levies at the rate of 20 percent per year. Nowhere did the proposal mention a land tax. This decision to emphasize the removal and reduction of taxes without acknowledging the necessary collateral increase of taxes on land ultimately proved disastrous, however, for it immedi-

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*Single taxers were discovering . . . the difficulty of qualifying a proposition with the efforts of volunteer petition circulators alone.*

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ately exposed the proposition to charges that it provided no alternative sources of revenue, or that it shifted the tax to land holders in a deceptive way.

Undaunted, Ralston plunged into the fracas on the amendment's behalf. Aware that the feeble and superannuated single tax organizations could not sustain an initiative campaign alone, he first sought support where he was already well known—in the ranks of organized labor. At his urging, Paul Scharrenberg, secretary of the California Federation of Labor and an important West Coast labor leader, secured a resolution at the state conference of the labor federation strongly endorsing the Ralston Amendment. Key to labor's action was the proposed repeal of the sales tax, yet the endorsement resolution also contained language unequivocally favoring "the progressive reduction and final extinction of taxation upon improvements and all forms of personal property, including the crops and fruit trees of the farmer."<sup>9</sup> Although this endorsement was reaffirmed at each annual conference of the Labor Federation until 1937 and although the single taxers held great faith in the coalition, its impact was in fact illusory. Labor leaders never succeeded in marshalling their membership into active political work for the proposition.

Following Ralston's lead in wording the amendment, in the fall of 1933 single taxers organized the "Tax Relief Campaign Committee" to skirt the stigma of the "single tax" label. The committee's task was to qualify the Ralston Amendment for the 1934 general election. To win a position on the ballot, some 110,000 valid petition signatures or 8 percent of the total vote cast at the

last statewide election were needed. By the summer of 1934, three months from the petition deadline, the signature drive was lagging. Single taxers were discovering, as have many other groups in California, the difficulty of qualifying a proposition with the efforts of volunteer petition circulators alone. In addition, organized resistance to the measure was mounted by building and loan associations, the Taxpayers Association, and the Farm Bureau. Even the *San Francisco Chronicle* warned its readers against signing the petitions offering relief from the sales tax because "the whole truth is that they are for the old familiar single tax."<sup>10</sup>

In June of 1934, the Los Angeles Tax Relief committee was forced to hire at the rate of two cents per name fifty professional solicitors to gather signatures. On the strength of Ralston's \$750 personal contribution to the efforts in Los Angeles, the organization signed a contract with W. G. Stennett, a professional petition circulator, to secure 18,000 guaranteed valid signatures.<sup>11</sup> The committee's move was (and is) standard practice for groups seeking to enter initiative measures on the ballot.

Single tax groups in other parts of the state adopted the tactics of the Los Angeles Committee and secured nearly double the needed number of signatures before the deadline. Yet when county clerks had finished checking the petitions, the majority of the signatures proved to be invalid, and the proposition failed to qualify by 1600 signatures. Keenly disappointed at this setback, the supporters of the proposition were somewhat cheered to be legally allowed to complete the collection of the needed signatures and thereby qualify the proposal for the next general election in 1936.<sup>12</sup>

Would the Ralston Amendment have carried in 1934? Doubtless, the novelty of the labor endorsement and the tide of anti-sales tax sentiment were strongly in its favor. On the other hand, the California electorate demonstrated no general enthusiasm for social experiments in the 1934 election. While joining the national tide approving Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, voters rejected



the labor-supported gubernatorial candidacy of Upton Sinclair and his EPIC program in favor of the conservative Frank Merriam administration.<sup>13</sup> The single tax proposal, one would suppose, could hardly have fared better than the Sinclair program.

The two-year deferral of the single-tax initiative campaign gave supporters additional time to organize. Soon collecting the 1600 necessary petition signatures, they placed the Ralston Amendment on the 1936 ballot in the strategic position as Proposition 1. But the handful of old-time single taxers who had thrown themselves into the petition campaign in anticipation of a whirlwind victory were sorely pressed to sustain a protracted electoral fight. Most organizers had to return to their jobs, and they left Jackson Ralston with the burden of carrying the issue to the public.

**A**ging and himself unable to travel extensively, Ralston brought a young single taxer named Noah Alper from St. Louis to become his executive secretary. Opening an office in San Francisco, Alper reorganized the campaign committee, and Ralston replaced Edward Vandeleur, the president of the State Federation of Labor, as chairman of the committee, which was renamed "Sales Tax Relief Association of California." The association nevertheless continued to display prominently in campaign literature the names of Scharrenberg and Vandeleur, the two most prominent labor officials in the state. Lacking funds to promote the cause through advertising, Ralston and Alper kept the campaign alive in the San Francisco Bay area in the next two years mainly by speaking to interested audiences.

Gradually uniting in opposing the Ralston Amendment, however, was a formidable coalition of real estate boards, taxpayers groups, educators who believed that the sales tax was essential to the continued operation of the schools, county boards of supervisors, the State Board

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*Opposing the Ralston Amendment was a formidable coalition of real estate boards, taxpayer groups, educators, county boards of supervisors, utility companies, and the Farm Bureau.*

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of Equalization, utility companies, and the Farm Bureau. Over the next years and without exception, the press also grew increasingly hostile. Blistering editorials appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and by 1936 the amendment was labelled by a Southern California newspaper as a "measure with a red tinge."<sup>14</sup>

Determined to prevent the Ralston Amendment from reaching the voters, the opposition moved in the summer of 1936 to have it invalidated. Accordingly, two San Francisco attorneys petitioned the state supreme court on behalf of the president of the California Congress of Parents and Teachers to have Proposition 1 removed from the ballot.<sup>15</sup> Alleged in the petition was that the title of Proposition 1 did not properly describe the proposal since it failed to disclose that tax revenues were to be shifted to land values. The court agreed, ruling eight to one in favor of removal from the ballot.

Stunned but experienced in setbacks, Ralston determined that the measure would reach the people even if he and Alper had to carry on the fight alone. Drafting a revised amendment, printing new petitions, and contributing \$15,000 of his own money and another \$5,000 from friends, Ralston again contracted with Stennett, the petition circulator from Southern California, to secure enough signatures to win a place for the measure on the 1938 ballot.<sup>16</sup>

Hoping to avoid an expensive election battle in 1938, the opposition set about to prevent the proposal from qualifying. Its agents threatened Stennett's canvassers, offered the canvassers more profitable work, and bought

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WE TAKE PLEASURE IN ANNOUNCING THAT JACKSON H. RALSTON, ESQ., LATE OF WASHINGTON, D. C., WHO HAS RECENTLY ESTABLISHED HIS HOME AT PALO ALTO, WILL HEREAFTER BE ASSOCIATED WITH THIS FIRM IN AN ADVISORY WAY AND WILL PRACTICE AS COUNSEL IN MATTERS INVOLVING QUESTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW AND PROCEDURE.

MR. RALSTON WAS AMERICAN AGENT IN CHARGE OF THE CASE OF THE PIOUS FUND OF THE CALIFORNIAS BROUGHT AGAINST MEXICO, OPENING THE HAGUE PERMANENT COURT OF ARBITRATION (1902), UMPIRE OF THE ITALIAN-VENEZUELAN MIXED CLAIMS COMMISSION SITTING AT CARACAS (1903), AMERICAN COUNSEL IN THE LANDREAU CASE, UNITED STATES VS. PERU, HEARD IN LONDON WITH VISCOUNT FINLAY AS UMPIRE (1922), AND HAS TAKEN PART IN NUMEROUS OTHER INTERNATIONAL CAUSES. HE WAS THE EDITOR OF "VENEZUELAN ARBITRATIONS OF 1903," AND IS AUTHOR OF "INTERNATIONAL ARBITRAL LAW AND PROCEDURE," "DEMOCRACY'S INTERNATIONAL LAW," ETC.

CUSHING & CUSHING.

SAN FRANCISCO, DECEMBER 15, 1924.

*Upon his "retirement" in 1924, Ralston served as an advisor to San Francisco's Cushing & Cushing law firm.*

the petitions from the canvassers before they could be turned in to the single tax organization.<sup>17</sup> According to the *San Francisco News*, this petition fight was the most vicious in California's history.<sup>18</sup>

Unable to combat these tactics in the cities, Stennett reluctantly moved his efforts to rural counties where canvassing for signatures consumed more time and money. The opposition, nevertheless, pursued him. For instance, after Stennett's chief agent, Pieter Flanton, rented an office on the second floor of the Holland Building in Fresno and placed a notice in the *Bee* newspaper seeking people to circulate petitions, he discovered a man in the lobby of his building who was diverting applicants to another office where they were offered employment on another proposition-qualification drive. Flanton countered by placing a larger advertisement in the *Bee* instructing applicants: "Take elevator to second floor."<sup>19</sup>

Despite harassment of this sort in Fresno, Stockton, and Sacramento, enough signatures were collected to qualify the Ralston initiative measure as Proposition 20 in the 1938 election. Again, as in 1936, a shortage of funds for media campaigns forced Ralston, Alper, and a few die-hard companions to seek speaking engagements to plead the reasonableness of their proposal. By Ralston's estimation, the opposition, on the other hand, spent perhaps \$250,000 on billboard and newspaper advertisements that alarmed voters with threats of closed schools, eliminated jobs, and homes lost through enforced tax sales.

Moreover, single taxers were adversely affected by

other measures on the lengthy 1938 ballot. The State Federation of Labor, for example, withdrew its endorsement of the amendment for the first time since 1933, because the unions were embroiled in an intense struggle of their own against the ballot's Proposition 1, a measure to outlaw labor strikes. To avoid alienating voters on that proposition, Edward Vandeleur informed Jackson, the labor federation could not afford to take a stand on any others.<sup>20</sup> Another ballot measure known as the "Ham and Eggs" scheme, Proposition 25, stole the preponderance of public attention. Supporters of this relief measure which offered "\$30 every Thursday" to oldsters, were told that the proposed pensions could not be financed without sales tax revenue.

Reaching the electorate in 1938 after a five-year struggle, the Ralston Amendment was soundly defeated almost five to one.<sup>21</sup> Faithful to the end to Henry George's belief in popular democratic processes, the single taxers' effort to repeal the sales tax collapsed. Not that the amendment's poor electoral showing reflected support for the sales tax; the latter tax remained an unpopular imposition on depression-ridden consumers in 1938. Rather, the amendment's defeat stemmed from the public's uncertainty about the consequences of the shift to taxing land values. Special interests organized to combat the Ralston Amendment succeeded in touching a tender public nerve when they posed the spectral calamities ensuing from experimenting with the country's faltering fiscal structure.

The fate of the Ralston Amendment replicated the

experience of California's other depression remedies even more "instant or perilous," to use Lord Bryce's phrase. Upton Sinclair's socialistic EPIC program, Technocracy, the Townsend Plan, Ham and Eggs, and Utopia, Inc., each made a flamboyant but unsuccessful bid for public acceptance. Lord Bryce's assessment proved correct only insofar as Californians have been prolific in generating plans to hasten the millenium; as an electorate, they have been equally disposed to reject them.

Nor have the processes of direct legislation, on which turn-of-the-century progressive reformers including Henry George set such store, hastened the millenium. As the single taxers learned to their dismay, the initiative process remains especially accessible to well-heeled special interest groups who easily qualify ballot proposals by hiring canvassers. Most grass roots movements, on the other hand, are strained to collect what today amounts to over 300,000 voter signatures in California. Furthermore, should a popular measure reaching the ballot be regarded as inimical to wealthy and powerful interests, it may face the opposition of highly paid advertising and public relations services and capitious or hyper-technical legal challenges brought by well paid and skilled lawyers. The initiative process has perhaps not served the cause of reform as well as it has served those who seek merely to bypass the ponderous workings of the legislature.

As for Jackson Ralston, the aging reformer never relinquished the belief that people could be persuaded to accept the tax on land value as an alternative to regressive taxes. After 1938, he continued to urge single taxers to keep the faith that Californians might eventually see their true interests. Characteristically, he offered no regrets about the long and fruitless campaign or its severe financial cost to him. Shortly before his death at the age of eighty-nine, he recalled that the sacrifice had not deprived him of a single cigar and that many people who thought him foolish would have spent the same amount to build another church.<sup>22</sup>

All the illustrations in this article are from the Bancroft Library, University of California.

## Notes

1. James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth* (New York: 1888), III: 223, quoted in Carey McWilliams, *California: The Great Exception* (New York: 1949), p. 87.
2. Jackson H. Ralston, "Adventures in the Life of a Washington Lawyer" (manuscript in the Ralston Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley), chapter I. Hereafter cited as "Ralston Autobiography."
3. *Ibid.*, chapter 1, p. 5.
4. Samuel Gompers, *Seventy Years of Life and Labor* (New York: E. P. Dutton Company, 1925), II: 221.
5. "Ralston Autobiography," chapter 9, pp. 1-6.
6. Francis J. Weber, "The Pious Fund of the Californias," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, February, 1963, pp. 91-94.
7. Manley O. Hudson, *The Permanent Court of International Justice* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1934), p. 27.
8. *International Law and Procedure* (1910), *The Law and Procedure of International Tribunals* (1926), and *International Arbitration From Athens to Locarno* (1941).
9. California Federation of Labor, *Proceedings of the State Convention of the California Federation of Labor Held at Monterey, September 14-18, 1933*, p. 45.
10. *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 12, 1934.
11. George Patterson to Jackson Ralston, June 29, 1934, Ralston Papers.
12. Ralston's complete correspondence with single tax leaders is in the Ralston Papers.
13. Governor James Rolfe died in office in 1934. He was succeeded by Lieutenant Governor Frank Merriam of Long Beach.
14. *The Riverside Press*, August 8, 1936.
15. *Clarke v. Jordan*, 7 Cal. (2d) 248; 60 Pac (2d) 457 (1936).
16. Contract between Ralston and W. G. Stennett, October 7, 1937, Ralston Papers.
17. *Land and Freedom*, March, 1938, p. 47; May, 1938, pp. 86-87; July, 1938, p. 110.
18. *San Francisco News*, July 28, 1938.
19. Pieter Flanton to Jackson Ralston, June 14, 1938, Ralston Papers.
20. Edward Vandeleur to Jackson Ralston, October 14, 1938, Ralston Papers.
21. The official vote on Proposition 20 was 1,836,411 to 372,686. Secretary of State, *Statement of the Vote of the State of California at the General Election, 1938*.
22. Ralston to Judge William E. Richardson, May 7, 1945, Ralston Papers.



## REVIEWS

Charles Wollenberg, *Reviews Editor*

### California History on Film

For the first time in the history of studying history, researchers are no longer limited to reading about what happened. The moving image, on film or videotape, now allows the historian to see and hear what happened.

Moving image material makes more and different kinds of information available for research, as documentaries and home movies record the myriad details of everyday life. The talent of outstanding artists and athletes is preserved. Major events such as wars, revolutions, natural disasters, and political speeches are now recorded visually.

Of course, a change in the form of primary source material does not cancel the need to evaluate those sources. The researcher must investigate the bias behind the creation of moving image material and speculate about what went on outside the frame. Significant events and people may not have been considered worthy of visual recording by contemporaries—or important material may not have survived.

If moving image material is of historical value, another set of questions requires attention. What will be saved? Who will save it? How long will the material last?

While footage of national interest is being archived, mainly in New York and Washington, D.C., in-depth materials on local and regional history will survive only if local organizations take an interest in their preservation. The following survey, which is limited to Northern California collections, attempts to explore what visual materials about California are being preserved and in what way. The institutions surveyed have similar policies and face similar problems. The images are almost entirely on film. Videotape seems to be too new for institutions to think of collecting. Even the collecting of film is usually an afterthought, for films are usually received as part of manuscript collections. Although younger or-

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Linda Artel coordinates film reference and research services at the University Art Museum's Pacific Film Archive, University of California, Berkeley.

ganizations value film in itself, they rarely solicit material actively, because they lack the staff time or acquisition funds to do so.

In these post-Proposition 13 times, funding, of course, is a major problem, but funding seems to have always been a problem. Older print-oriented institutions are not themselves convinced that collecting moving images is a high—hence adequately funded—priority. Media-oriented collections tend to become part of larger institutions that are also unconvinced such materials carry high priority.

Despite these difficulties, a variety of interesting material is being preserved, with the future pointing to an increase in preservation efforts. Consciousness about the importance of the moving image is increasing with society's greater reliance on visual media. The form itself has existed long enough to develop its own history and, more concretely, piles of footage that demand attention.

#### SACRAMENTO MUSEUM AND HISTORY DEPARTMENT, SACRAMENTO

The largest, newest, and most valuable collection in Northern California (perhaps on the West Coast) is the news film library at the Sacramento Museum and History Department. Six months ago, KCRA-TV, Sacramento's NBC affiliate, donated 3 1/2 million feet of 16mm film to the museum.

Since the television industry routinely throws away outtakes (footage that is not edited into a finished film or video work) and usually saves aired footage no more than three years (a legal requirement), quantities of this footage are rare. In this case, the station's first cameraman and present head-cameraman, Harry Sweet, had the foresight and tenacity to save footage produced at the station since its inception in 1955. Over the years Sweet saved and daily indexed the footage, until lack of storage space prompted an order to get rid of the material. Sweet would then take the film home, wait until the storage

problem was forgotten, and start returning the footage a bit at a time.

Sweet did more than save the station's own footage. He felt that film pre-dating the station's productions would also be useful in compiling future documentaries and specials. To obtain pre-1955 footage, he systematically purchased a movie newsreel series, *World's Greatest Headlines*, that dates back to 1910.

Quantity is not the only measure of the Sacramento collection's worth. Rated "Class A" by its network, KCRA has often supplied NBC with news teams to cover national issues occurring in California (i.e. Robert Kennedy's campaign and assassination) and elsewhere (i.e. the Viet Nam War, Johnson's tour of Latin America).

The station also maintains the largest bureau covering state government, as well as active bureaus in San Francisco and Los Angeles. At least 500,000 feet of the collection are outtakes, meaning the footage available on a given event is much longer than the short clips that actually appeared on the air.

Several other features greatly enhance the collection's value. All the footage is on safety film, whereas other news archive collections are on videotape, a material experts fear will disintegrate much more quickly than film. The collection will be updated continually. Each year KCRA will deposit footage that is three years old.

Minimal legal restrictions on use of the footage make this collection one of the most accessible in the country. Use of collections is typically severely limited by copyright restrictions, but KCRA has generously placed no restrictions other than one requiring a credit line on footage shown commercially in the station's viewing area. The museum will set up commercial and non-commercial copying rates to generate needed maintenance funds.

Credit for ensuring the preservation of this collection is also due James Henley, the museum's executive director. He has supervised the creation of a model storage system, is working to fund the staff needed for the

*Downtown Oakland was the setting of a movie sponsored by a city newspaper in the 1920s.*

collection, and hopes to add another film collection to the museum.

Present cataloging and staff limitations will hamper use of the collection while a two-year computer indexing system is compiled. The staff is most responsive to well-researched inquiries, i.e. specifically dated requests, since the daily station index is the current access tool. Requests that require extensive staff time cannot be filled. The museum director may be contacted at 916-447-2958.

#### THE BANCROFT LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

Film footage is sometimes part of the manuscript collections preserved at the University of California's Bancroft Library, an archive for the history of California and the West. Vivian Fisher, head of the library's microform division, describes three major concentrations of film.

About ten reels chronicle activities of the Class of 1912, another five reels show the Class of 1919. A dozen reels of government-produced material from the World War II Japanese Relocation Authority show the building and operation of internment centers located in remote areas of the western United States. The largest group of films, seventy-five reels, is from the Sierra Club and dates back to the 1920s. Part of the footage is from films produced by the organization, including some outtakes not edited into the finished films. The remainder, films made by Sierra Club members on backpacking and climbing trips, constitutes a valuable visual record of back country in the West during the last fifty years.

Other footage at the Bancroft covers a variety of topics that are listed on cards in the library's information file. Films are indexed by name and subject, though the accuracy of subject indexing depends on how much information was received from the film's donor. The library has been able to preserve unstable nitrate footage by transferring it to safety film, however some original safety footage is in dry, brittle condition. (Nitrate, a



standard film stock base until 1951, is highly flammable and capable of spontaneous combustion.)

The Bancroft Library has no viewing facilities but allows researchers to view materials across campus at the University Art Museum's Pacific Film Archive. Permission to copy footage must be obtained from donors. The librarian can be reached at 415-642-3781.

#### UAM/PACIFIC FILM ARCHIVE, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

The Pacific Film Archive, part of the University Art Museum at the University of California, Berkeley, houses a collection of 5,000 titles, including permanent and long-term deposits. California historical footage forms only a small part of this collection which encompasses an international selection of film as art. Major holdings include Japanese, early Russian, animated, avant-garde, and Nazi propaganda films.

Historical material includes tinted footage of the 1915 Pan Pacific Exposition, a few hundred feet of the Sutro



Baths in the 1890s, pre-earthquake footage of Market Street (circa 1903), and a Standard Oil-sponsored film on San Francisco made in the 1950s. A smattering of films about the campus includes John F. Kennedy's 1963 Charter Day speech.

Budgetary restrictions severely limit access to other materials. Several hundred reels of historical footage on nitrate stock are stored at the University of California, Los Angeles, Film Archive vaults in downtown Los Angeles since the university has no special storage vaults in the Bay Area. The 1960s news footage donated by a local television station also remains uncatalogued because the material is on 2" videotape which can only be viewed on costly broadcast-quality equipment not owned by the archive.

To aid researchers, the archive provides facilities for viewing footage from its own collection or footage obtained from other sources. Facilities for watching 16mm or 35mm footage on a screen or on researcher-operated flatbed viewers are available. A small viewing fee is charged.

Unique in Northern California is the archive's public information service, which fields inquiries on any aspect of film study or use. This service can provide a list of California historical films available for purchase and make referrals to possible archival sources of film materials in the United States.

For screening appointments or information queries, call 415-642-1437.

#### OAKLAND MUSEUM HISTORY DEPARTMENT, OAKLAND

Although the Oakland Museum only recently began collecting moving image material, it has articulated a clear and thoughtful policy about the importance of preserving media as an historic record. This policy also considers media itself as part of contemporary history.

Collecting media materials that relate to California

history is the first step, but the goals of the museum's history department extend to using these materials for research and exhibition. The Bruener Gallery is designed to reflect twentieth-century media and its influence on the people of California. According to Curator of History L. Thomas Frye, this gallery is "a hall where three dimensional objects and graphics, video film and a computer terminal interpret our recent past and ask questions about our future."

The museum's small film collection includes a 1913 Moose Parade in downtown Oakland, the launching of a merchant ship at the Oakland port in the 1920s, and an hour of color film on the making of liberty ships at Kaiser's World War II shipyards in Richmond.

Assistant Curator of History Brooks Johnson has solved the problem of wear on original film prints by copying many films onto videotape. These copies are available for viewing at the museum. Viewing access to other prints is limited. For information, contact the assistant curator at 415-273-3842.

#### NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM, SAN FRANCISCO

In twenty-five years of accepting footage that was made available to them, this museum has gathered a small but valuable specialized collection of seventeen films on westcoast shipping. Presently covering the period from 1900 to the 1940s, the collection includes a 1916 film titled *Hunting the Sperm Whale*, a Pathe Newsreel on sailboard racing in San Francisco Bay (donated by actor Sterling Hayden), a film on cod fishing in Richardson Bay, and a Del Monte-sponsored film on fishing in Alaska. The museum also has footage on its own boats, such as the *Balclutha*. About half the footage was filmed by maritime personnel, with the other half produced by film professionals.

A year ago the museum was able to copy its nitrate footage onto safety film. To facilitate research access,

*Before the earthquake, San Francisco's Market Street was filmed by a cameraman riding a cable car to the Ferry Building.*

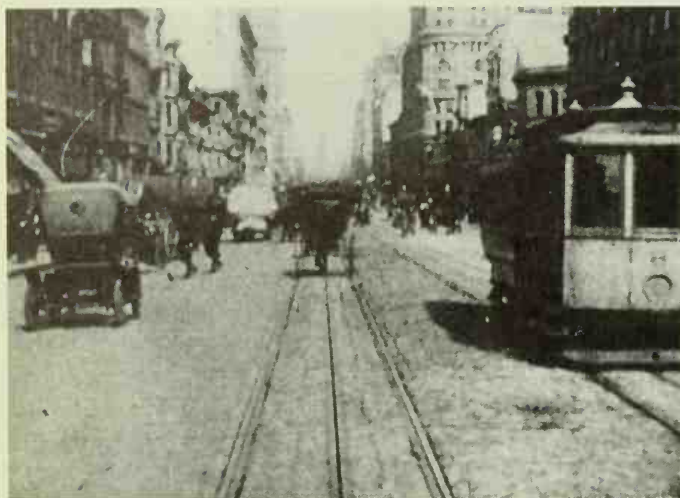


photo archivist John Maounis is compiling the collection's first complete catalogue. The museum maintains no regular viewing facilities but permits researchers to view its footage at other institutions. Laboratory costs and a small handling fee are charged for copies. The archivist can be reached at 415-556-8177.

#### HOOVER INSTITUTION, STANFORD UNIVERSITY, STANFORD

Because the Hoover Institution at Stanford University collects material on twentieth-century social, political and economic change, their moving image collection is not limited to California history. Three-hundred reels of Nazi-produced newsreels constitute their biggest collection on film. Film and videotape of Ronald Reagan's election campaigns and governorship make up a sizeable media collection focusing on recent California political history.

Beyond actual footage, Hoover offers several media research services which could serve as a model in the field. West-coast access to the Vanderbilt Television

News Archives is one valuable service. Vanderbilt, located in Tennessee, collects the evening news broadcasts of the three major networks. For a moderate copying fee, the Hoover Institution will order a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " video-cassette copy of any Vanderbilt material. Researchers make their selections by using the Hoover copy of the news archive's indexes. Footage has been collected for ten years and is currently indexed until 1975. This ability to view footage housed thousands of miles away illustrates the way in which the electronic moving image can be used as an active aid in the study of history, not just as passive recording material.

Although a copying policy may seem unimportant, the Hoover Institution's policy offers another valuable aid to researchers by allowing them to make copies before obtaining copyright clearance. Usually the opposite policy is enforced, making it difficult, if not impossible, for a researcher to get a viewing copy for individual use. The Hoover policy treats a private viewing copy as analogous in principle to a xerox copy. (Broadcast or otherwise publicly-used footage must have a copyright clearance.) A \$10 service fee plus laboratory costs is charged for copies.

For further information, contact Deputy Archivist Charles Palm at 415-497-3563.

#### CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, SAN FRANCISCO

The historical society has about fifteen reels of film that include fascinating pieces of footage such as film on downtown San Francisco circa 1933, the 1938 flood in Los Angeles' Arroyo Seco, and the Berkeley boat harbor in 1938. The society has received this footage as part of larger manuscript and photo collections.

The stills are reproduced by Professor Bertrand Augst from footage at the Pacific Film Archive.

## Book Reviews

### *San Francisco: The Story of a City.*

By John B. McGloin, S. J. (San Rafael: Presidio Press, 1979. 443 pp. \$16.95.)

*Reviewed by Gladys Hanson, San Francisco City Archivist and author of the San Francisco Almanac.*

Too many careless histories of San Francisco are written by authors so sure of their readers' interest in the sensational that they neglect almost everything else. *San Francisco: The Story of a City* is a notable exception, for John B. McGloin, S.J., tells this story with great integrity. Nevertheless his very definite views concerning Eugene Schmitz's administration as our twenty-sixth mayor are certain to arouse wholesome discussion.

Few writers, I am sure, would have attempted the scope he covers in this volume which examines the period from the rise of San Francisco as a Spanish settlement to its life as a modern metropolis. A subject as broad as the history of San Francisco and its people is extremely difficult to encompass in a single volume. Father McGloin has dealt with this problem by arranging his book into sections which include: Beginnings Through the Nineteenth Century; San Francisco Landmarks; People, Labor and Politics; and More Modern Times.

Knowing the importance of a good subject index, the author has provided one with 636 entries. In addition, a section called "Sources & Notes" contributes excellent bibliographic references for those interested in further study.

San Francisco's newest chronicle is a memory trip for me. It brings to mind a classroom in 1965 when Father McGloin, full of zest and enthusiasm and clothed in a long black cassock, faced another group of University of San Francisco students to begin a year-long recitation on a city that should never be called "Frisco".

For this special course, Father McGloin prepared a syllabus of 101 pages as our text. In his introductory lecture, he stressed that he wished to present "scientifically accurate information" and that "some legends would fall and some hitherto overstressed personalities would lose some of their glamour."

Several years later, a much larger student text numbering 554 pages was made available, and it is on this material that John McGloin's latest production is based.

No United States city has such an aura of romance, adven-

ture, color, and glamour as San Francisco, and this new book is most useful, as well as enjoyable, in helping to provide a clearer perspective of its history. Recording the annals of our city is a vast and complicated project. It may be likened to peering into a kaleidoscope which changes at each turn, many turns, of the glass. *San Francisco: The Story of a City* is an overview of a favorite city and a "must own" for collectors of San Francisciana.

### *The Road to California: The Search for a Southern Overland Route, 1540-1848.*

By Harlan Hague. (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1978. American Trails Series XI. 325 pp. \$20.50.)

*Reviewed by Donald R. Culton, Associate Professor of History and Evening and Outreach Coordinator, Los Angeles Harbor College.*

Of never ending interest to the student and scholar of the American West is the varied, colorful, often tragic, and sometimes tedious story of trailblazing. Based on a wide reading of published journals, articles and books, *The Road to California* is a condensation of the record of 300 years of painfully slow progress in linking Southern California by land to points east and south.

Early in the book, Hague makes the point well that the white man opened few trails in the Southwest. Paths had been traveled for thousands of years by people who would guide the earliest Spaniards through the region. The tale of Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca is a prime example of white man following Indian. This story and those of Marcos de Niza and Estevanico, Coronado, Espejo, and Oñate remain as fascinating today as when Bancroft and Bolton produced their classic studies.

The adventures of Father Eusebio Francisco Kino are retold, with the author owing a heavy debt to Bolton. The Jesuit missionary became the foremost champion of the frontier of New Spain shortly after his arrival in America in 1678. Kino made impressive contributions exploring, mapping, and preaching the benefits of the region for Spain and the Catholic Church. His story, however, becomes typical of others when much of what he accomplished was promptly forgotten upon his death.



*City life and architecture in Los Angeles, one of the urban West's cities with populations over 8000 in 1880, strongly reflected their eastern counterparts. The towers of city hall (center) and the courthouse rise above the Broadway street scene.*

Both Franciscan Tomas Hermenegildo Garcés and his fellow explorer, Captain Juan Bautista de Anza, experienced this same mixture of success and failure. Although Anza, and Garcés left their marks, their legacies may be best remembered because of an opportunity that was missed. Time and again Spanish authorities, through lack of imagination or commitment, were unable to establish amicable and lasting relations with seemingly cooperative Indians.

If the Spanish and Mexicans had been more successful as colonizers in the area, it would not have been as common for American fur trappers to think that they were the first whites to see that part of the world. Much of the earlier record had been forgotten or stored in dusty archives, however, waiting for rediscovery in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Taking advantage of the distractions caused by Mexican independence, the trappers investigated the streams and rivers of much of the Southwest. In the process they added their share to improving the land connection to California. The names are familiar to readers of western Americana: Jedediah Smith, Ewing Young, James Ohio Pattie, and Kit Carson, for example.

During the 1820s and 1830s, the Old Spanish Trail took form. Reaching to the northwest from Santa Fe into present-day Utah, this route dropped down into Southern California after touching the Virgin River and crossing the Mojave Desert. This path became the principal means of reaching California by land until the Mexican War brought Stephen Watts Kearney and Philip St. George Cooke into the picture. Kearney, at the head of his Army of the West, opened a route that Cooke would improve. As leader of the Mormon Battalion, Cooke managed to bring the first wagons into California, by way of the Gila River and across the Colorado Desert. The military had set the stage for the next chapter in the story, the rush for gold beginning in 1848. As the book ends, one is left with the feeling that man had conquered the arid southwest, but incompletely.

All of this story has been told before. However, it has been put together in a fashion which provides interesting reading for the new student and for those wishing to visit old friends. Too much of the action is found in the numerous and lengthy footnotes. Another, albeit mild, criticism is that the three maps inadequately assist in organizing and orienting the reader's imagination. In spite of its limitations, this work, Volume XI in the American Trails Series of the Arthur H. Clark Company, is a worthy addition to the history of the American West.



### *The Urban West at the End of the Frontier.*

By Lawrence H. Larson. (Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1978. xiii, 173 pp. \$12.50.)

*Reviewed by Robert E. Levinson, Professor of History at San Jose State University, San Jose, California, and author of The Jews in the California Gold Rush (1978).*

What constituted "The Urban West" in 1880? According to the author, such a description belonged to twenty-four towns with populations of 8,000 or more in nine western states and territories. But what sort of towns were they? What went on in them? Was the "city life" of these areas distinctively "western," or was it a composite of urban development forms witnessed in the more settled East?

According to Lawrence H. Larsen, it was most definitely the latter. As he points out, "The major frontier towns owed much more to their eastern counterparts than to the challenge of the western environment" (p. 2). Furthermore,

"Westerners sought to build cities that looked as much as possible like those in the older sections" (p. 48).

This short, attractive book is sure to settle several arguments concerning urban growth in the nineteenth-century West. The author has assembled an enormous and impressive collection of data to indicate that western city builders were not innovators. To the contrary, they were efficient copiers of well-developed systems that seemed to work adequately for all facets of city life in the older, more settled sections of the United States, to the exclusion of native forms already present on the frontier.

Whether in the establishment of street paving or municipal parks, "there was no new society. The western towns borrowed basic concepts from the East, whether or not they suited the environment" (p. 60). In health, fire and police protection, "The extent to which they succeeded or failed depended on existing norms and not upon new methods that originated in the West" (p. 91).

In other words, you could take the people out of the eastern cities, but you could not take the eastern cities out of the people. Much of what they originated was not novel; it was simply an extension of what they had tested elsewhere. The only problem seemed to be the physical act of settling, and the author deals with this subject very well in his chapter on technology that discusses the improvements in transportation systems after the Civil War.

This book is a useful summary of a subject that should have concerned urban historians and western historians long ago. Larsen may now have written all that needs to be said on this subject.

*Biography of a Progressive: Franklin K. Lane, 1864-1921.*

By Keith W. Olson. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1979. 233 pp. \$17.95.)

*Reviewed by Richard J. Orsi, Professor of History at California State University, Hayward, who specializes in California & western history.*

Based upon extensive research in manuscript collections, this book is an informative political biography of Franklin K. Lane, a second-echelon progressive leader at the state and

national levels. Olson traces Lane's career from his involvement in early municipal reform movements in San Francisco in the 1880s and 1890s, including the city charter revision of 1898, through his largely unsuccessful fling at California Democratic party politics, to his service on the Interstate Commerce Commission during an important formative period from 1906 to 1913. According to Olson, however, Lane's principal contribution was made between 1913 and 1920, when as secretary of the interior, he served as midwife to several important new natural resource policies, including Alaskan development, expanded federal reclamation, water-power development and regulation, and the leasing system for minerals on federal lands.

Unfortunately, the book is unevenly balanced. While the treatment of Lane's California career is sketchy, with few references to recent works in the state's political history, the Washington years unfold in meticulous, often tedious detail. An entire chapter of this slim volume, for example, consists of a repetitious review of Lane's unerring appointment of subordinates in the Interior Department and his fastidious office management, including his often futile battles with bureaucrats to reduce work backlogs, speed-up paperwork processing, and improve the readability of department correspondence. Later, the author spends four pages refuting the common charge that Lane was the major source of news leaks in the Wilson administration and one page chronicling Lane's successful repulsion of a raid by the Departments of War and Navy on the office space in the new Interior building.

The major flaw in this book, however, is the author's failure at important junctures to be sufficiently critical of Lane individually and the progressive movement generally. Olson essentially employs the "neo-progressive" interpretive framework. Progressivism is portrayed as an anti-monopoly, anti-graft movement, and the progressives, especially Lane, are usually characterized as efficient, wise, non-partisan, and above all, honest, democratic, and public-spirited. In contrast, the progressives' opponents represent the anti-democratic forces of bossism, corruption, special interest, and corporate monopoly. This somewhat Manichean framework leads the author to miss much of the deeper structural context, as well as the contradictions, of progressive politics. For example, San Francisco's city charter movement, in which Lane figured prominently, emerges as a simple contest between honest, efficient government and graft. On the contrary, other recent historians have demonstrated that the city's politics in this era, particularly the charter revision question,

*The highly ornate and many-roomed main building of Napa's insane asylum housed some of the state's "disordered in mind" in the mid-1880s.*

more fundamentally pitted class and ethnic interests against one another in a struggle for power in the city. Olson's treatment of Lane's tenure in the Interior Department reveals similar problems. Lane's vigorous prosecution of Indian land allotment and other programs, which even Lane himself admitted were designed to "dig up and overturn" Indian tradition, are defended by Olson as examples of Lane's "enduring concern for resource development, in this case human resources." Moreover, Olson emphasizes that Lane's management sharply reduced the corruption in the scandal-plagued Bureau of Indian Affairs. Presumably, if Lane's bureau was destroying Indian culture and social organization and speeding up the process of land loss and impoverishment, it was at least doing so more efficiently and honestly than ever before! Also, by treating conservationism as largely an anti-monopoly movement, Olson, as Lane did before him, neglects to investigate other issues, such as the conflict between utilitarian and preservationist approaches to the natural environment, which the progressives left unresolved. In short, although the book is well written and provides much information on the personal career of an important political figure, it does not, despite an historiographical introduction, shed much light on the broader progressive movement, especially in California.

*So Far Disordered in Mind: Insanity in California, 1870-1930.*

By Richard W. Fox. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978. xvi + 204 pp. \$10.00.)

*Reviewed by Irving H. Hendrick, Professor and Associate Dean of the School of Education, University of California, Riverside, who teaches and writes on the history of education in California and the United States.*

Richard W. Fox's *So Far Disordered in Mind* is a serious and scholarly history of California's treatment of insane persons during the sixty years before 1930. The first phase of the title captures the essence of the legal criteria used for commitment during most of that period. Central to Fox's work is the review and analysis of 1,229 court cases involving persons determined to be insane by the San Francisco Superior Court between 1906 and 1929.



The book succeeds in informing the reader about changes in practice over time, but its principal contribution lies in interpreting and explaining why Californians felt particularly inclined to institutionalize the insane. And inclined they were. Between the 1870s and 1920s, California had the highest rate of commitments of the insane in the nation. Most were initiated by relatives for the purpose of removing troublesome persons from the family's responsibility. Often the commitments were based on an incomplete diagnosis with such errors as were made most frequently falling on the side of committing. While the insane came from all walks of life, the blue-collar portion of the population, along with the unmarried and the widowed, were heavily overrepresented. The foreign-born, on the other hand, did not appear to be overrepresented. Although the insane included persons described by Fox as a "motley assortment of deviants" (p. 136), many were not necessarily mentally ill. His analysis of the San Francisco commitment records reveals what he sees as firm evidence that the convenience function was paramount in California during the first third of this century. Unwanted persons could be most easily and cheaply confined by finding them insane. Many of the behavioral characteristics most commonly cited as reasons for commitment had little to do with severe mental disability. Between 1906 and 1929 the three most commonly reported behaviors indicating insanity were excessive consumption of alcohol, fear of bodily harm, and masturbation.

Apart from the often capricious manner in which persons



were determined to be insane was the nature of their institutionalization. As late as 1920, twenty-nine of California's fifty-eight counties still confined the insane in jail cells with criminals. Even San Francisco's separate detention hospital was little more than a special purpose jail, complete with locked cells. By the early twentieth century, deviants of diverse physiological and psychological maladies came to be seen as having a single characteristic—that of being "defective" (p. 184). Deviants became distinguished from non-deviants not so much by their mental condition, but by their inability to function effectively as members of the community.

Although the conceptual differences between normal and insane persons appeared to be narrowing in the era, the result was not less frequent institutionalization of the insane. Rather, the latter became viewed as a group of deviants who could benefit from sophisticated treatment available in urban psychopathic hospitals. The availability of these more humane, better equipped, and more appropriately staffed facilities made it even easier for family members to commit their deviant relatives.

While Fox's book is not the most comprehensive in the field, it makes a valuable and original contribution to the history of psychiatry and mental health in the United States. Most impressively, Fox's interpretations are based on a solid base of data.

*A Scotch Paisano in Old Los Angeles: Hugo Reid's Life in California, 1832-1852. Derived from His Correspondence.*

By Susanna Bryant Dakin. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1939. Reprint paperback, 1979. 329 pp. \$3.95.)

*Reviewed by John W. Caughey, Emeritus Professor of History, University of California, Los Angeles.*

Susanna Bryant Dakin's *Scotch Paisano* of forty summers ago presents Hugo Reid in the ambience of the idyllic pastoral days before the Gold Rush and not entirely vanquished by the Gold Rush. Cleland, Dana, Bancroft, and other serious writers attest to the attractions. The learned Lindley Bynum stoutly maintained that he would rather have been a Californian then.

Vivid social description is one of the strong points of this biography. Aided by a substantial Stearns-Reid correspondence, the author brings her subject very much alive. Reid was an engaging person, trader as well as ranchero, repeatedly a civic leader, and on top of that a writer.

As added dividend, a documentary chapter goes through all the steps Reid had to take to get himself certified as a Catholic and a Mexican so that he could marry Victoria Comicrabit, a neophyte of Mission San Gabriel. The chapter descants on the wedding and the celebration as legend reports.

For good measure the book includes two appendixes. A fourteen-page tabulation lists the Britons and Americans who took up residence in California before 1840, that is, before the pioneer settlers, so called, began to pour in by the overland trails. Then Reid's letters on his wife's people, the Indians of Los Angeles County, are printed. They first appeared in the *Los Angeles Star* in 1851. Along with the B. D. Wilson report of the next year, in which Reid had a hand, these letters are prime informants on the original inhabitants of the Los Angeles Basin. Long out of print, Dakin's warm biography is good reading and worth studying.

The photographs are from the California Historical Society Collections.

## California Check List

By Gary Kurutz, *Library Director*

The California Check List provides notice of publication of books, pamphlets, and monographs pertaining to the history of California. Readers knowing of recent (1978-79) publications which need additional publicity are requested to send the following bibliographical information to the compiler of this list: Author, title, location and name of publisher, date of publication, number of pages, price, and address where item can be purchased if not carried at general bookstores.

- Andrews, Ralph W. *Heroes of the Western Woods*. Seattle: Superior Publishing Co., 1979. 194 pp. Publisher, Box 1710, Seattle, Wa. 98111. \$8.95 (cloth), \$6.95 (paper).  
The Bancroft Library, University of California. *Catalog of Printed Books*. Third Supplement. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1979. Publisher, 70 Lincoln St., Boston, Mass. 02111. \$795.00.
- . *The Plate of Brass Reexamined: A Supplementary Report*. Berkeley: The Bancroft Library, University of California, 1979. 17 pp.
- Bleyhl, Norris A. (compiler). *Some Newspaper References Concerning Indians and Indian-White Relationships in Northeastern California Chiefly between 1850 and 1920*. Chico: Northeastern California Regional Programs, 1979. Publisher, California State University, Chico 95927.
- Brown, Millard (editor). *Trinity 1978*. Weaverville: Trinity County Historical Society, 1979. Publisher, P.O. Box 333, Weaverville 96093. \$2.25.
- Cook, Sherburne F. and Woodrow Borah. *Essays in Population History: Mexico and California*. Vol. III. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979. 346 pp. \$20.00.
- Davidson, Harold G. *The Lost Works of Edward Borein*. Santa Barbara: by the author, 1979. 268 pp. Author, 4573 Nueces Drive, Santa Barbara 93110. \$25.00.
- DeLong, Harriet Tracy. *Schoolm'am, Stone Lagoon, California, 1903-04*. Bainbridge Island, Wa.: by the author, 1979. 77 pp.

- Author, 11099 Battle Pt. Dr. NE, Bainbridge Island, Wa. 98110. \$5.75.
- Demoro, Harre W. *Southern Pacific Bay Area Steam*. Burlingame: Chatham Publishing Company, 1979. 144 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 283, Burlingame 94010. \$19.95.
- Elias, Sol P. *Stories of Stanislaus County* (facsimile edition). Modesto: McHenry Museum, 1979. Publisher, 1402 I Street, Modesto 95354. \$8.00.
- Etulian, Richard (editor). *Jack London on the Road*. Logan: Utah State University Press, 1979. Publisher, UMC 05 Logan, Utah 84322. \$7.50 (cloth); \$4.50 (paper).
- Gleeson, Charles J. *Outpost on Poverty Flat*. Central Valley: Books, 1979. 129 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 1396, Central Valley 96019. \$6.85.
- Hamm, Edward. *When Fresno Rode the Rails*. Glendale: Interurbans, 1979. 80 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 6444, Glendale 91205. \$9.50.
- Hanna, Warren L. *Lost Harbor: The Controversy over Drake's California Anchorage*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979. 476 pp. \$25.00.
- Heizer, Robert F. (editor). *Federal Concern about Conditions of California Indians, 1853-1913: Eight Documents*. Socorro: Ballena Press, 1979. Publisher, P.O. Box 1366, Socorro, New Mexico 87801. \$7.95.
- and Theodora Kroeber. *Ishi, Last Yahi: A Documentary History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979. 250 pp. \$17.50.
- Herron, Don. *Echoes from the Vaults of Yoh-Vombis. A Compendium of the Life of George F. Hass*. San Francisco: by the author, 1979. 56 pp. Author, 537 Jones St., No. 9270, San Francisco 94102. \$3.75.
- Howard, Donald M. *Big Sur's Lost Tribe*. Carmel: Monterey County Archaeological Society, 1979. Publisher, P.O. Box 4606, Carmel 93921. \$7.95.
- Huntington Library. *Guide to American Historical Manuscripts in the Huntington Library*. San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1979. 442 pp. Publisher, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino 91108. \$25.00.
- Jenkins, Olaf P. *The Great Watershed of California*. Monterey: Angel Press, 1978. 41 pp.

# Check List

- Author, P.O. Box 479, Pacific Grove 93950. \$4.00.
- Kahrl, William (Project Director). *The California Water Atlas*. Los Altos: William Kaufmann, Inc., 1979. 124 pp. Publisher, One First Street, Los Altos 94022. \$37.50.
- Koch, Margaret. *Santa Cruz County, Parade of the Past*. Fresno: Valley Publishers, 1979. 264 pp. Publisher, 8 E. Olive Ave., Fresno 93727. \$14.95.
- McWilliams, Carey. *The Education of Carey McWilliams*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979. 363 pp. \$11.95.
- Miller, Virginia P. *Ukonno'm: The Yuki Indians of Northern California*. Socorro: Ballena Press, 1979. 108 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 1366, Socorro, New Mexico 87801. \$6.95.
- Nordland, Ole J. *Coachella Valley's Golden Years* (revised edition). Coachella: Coachella Valley County Water District, 1978. 120 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 1058, Coachella 92236. \$2.50.
- O'Neil, Paul. *The End and the Myth. The Old West*. Alexandria: Time-Life Books, 1979. 240 pp. \$10.00.
- Rather, Lois. *Lotta's Fountain*. Oakland: The Rather Press, 1979. 99 pp. Publisher, 3200 Guido St., Oakland 94602. \$20.00.
- Robinson, Michael C. *Water for the West: The Bureau of Reclamation, 1902-1977*. Chicago: Public Works Historical Society, 1979. 117 pp. Publisher, 1313 East 60th St., Chicago, Illinois 60637. \$6.00.
- Sleeper, Jim. *Portrait from the Past . . . A Historical Profile of Orange County's Old County Courthouse*. Trabuco Canyon: California Classics, 1979. 32 pp. Orange County Historical Society, 2002 N. Main St., Santa Ana 92706.
- Spencer-Hancock, Diane. *Fort Ross: Indians-Russians-Americans. An Interpretive Guidebook to Fort Ross*. Jenner: Fort Ross Interpretive Association, 1978. Publisher, 19005 Coast Highway 1, Jenner 95450. \$2.50.
- Stanton, Jeffrey. *Venice, California, 1904-1930*. Venice: ARS Publications, 1978. Publisher, 3710 Pacific Ave., #16, Venice 90291. \$9.95 (cloth); \$4.95 (paper).
- Tarleton, Frank L. *Some Strike It Rich: Memories and Tales of a Native Son of California*. Hicksville, N.Y.: Exposition Press, 1979. 244 pp. Publisher, 900 So. Oyster Bay Rd., Hicksville, N.Y. 11801. \$7.50.
- Tassing, A. G. *Comanche, the Recalcitrant Mule*. Ukiah: Mendocino County Historical Society, 1978. 29 pp. Publisher, 603 W. Perkins Street, Ukiah 95482.
- Thomas, Robert C. *Drake at Olompo-Ali*. San Francisco: A-Pala Press, 1979. 89 pp. Publisher, 1790 26th Ave., San Francisco 94122. (no price listed).
- Tinkham, George Henry. *History of Stanislaus County with Biographical Sketches* (facsimile edition). Modesto: McHenry Museum, 1979. Publisher, 1402 I Street, Modesto 95354. \$37.50.
- Wallace, William J. and Edith Wallace. *Desert Foragers and Hunters: Indians of the Death Valley Region*. Ramona: Acoma Books, 1979. 44 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 4, Ramona 92065. \$3.25.
- Weber, Francis J. *California Catholicity*. Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1979. 207 pp. Publisher, 535 North Larchmont Blvd., Los Angeles 90004. \$13.00.
- Wild, Peter. *Pioneer Conservationists of Western America*. Missoula, Montana: Mountain Press, 1979. 246 pp. \$12.95.
- Wishart, David J. *The Fur Trade of the American West, 1807-1840*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979. 240 pp. Publisher, 901 North 17th Street, Lincoln, Neb. 68588. \$14.50.
- Woods, Richard D. and Grace Alvarez-Altman. *Spanish Surnames in Southwestern United States: A Dictionary*. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1979. 149 pp. Publisher, 70 Lincoln St., Boston, Mass. 02111. \$18.00.
- Vandenhoff, Anne. *Edward Dickson Baker*. Auburn: Pony Express Printers, 1979. 84 pp. Author, P.O. Box 965, Auburn 95603. \$6.00.
- . *School in Summer*. Auburn: Pony Express Printers, 1979. 52 pp. \$3.50.
- Vickery, Oliver. *Harbor Heritage: Tales of the Harbor Area of Los Angeles*. Lomita: Morgan Press, 1979. Publisher, P.O. Box 456, Lomita 90717. \$10.95.



# I AM CLAUDE GARAMOND

It is strange to me that my reputation, after twenty-score long years and more, should be for things I did not do, while those I did are almost lost in obscurity. I was a punch cutter, certainly the first in France and probably the first in the whole known world of my time, who established the business of designing types and cutting punches independent from a printing business. When I say I was a punch cutter I mean that by hand, I engraved punches in steel for each letter of the alphabet. These were used for making impressions into bronze matrices which, in turn, were employed to cast type. I had none of the fine, highfalutin punch cutting machines to make this work easy. I designed and cut all the punches for the Royal Greek types, copying the manuscripts of that clever Greek calligrapher, one Angelos Vergetios. I made these Royal Greek types for Robert Estienne who, at the time, was the King's Printer of France. As I recall it, the first size was completed in 1544. These Greek types were considered of such importance that all printers who used them were entitled to designate their work by a distinctive printer's mark, the device of a curious serpent and a vine entwined around a staff. You know me for the Garamond Romans and Italics. 'Tis true I designed Romans and Italics, several of them. Some may say I copied the forms of Aldus. Whether I did or not I set a new



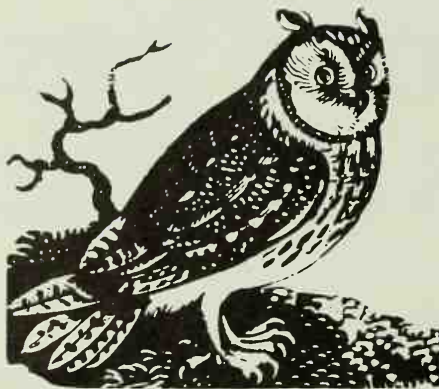
style of Roman types in my France and the continent. My types were copied by the Dutch and it is claimed that William Caslon in 1722 was influenced in his designing by the Dutch punch cutters who had copied my style. In your day you have had a renaissance of Garamond or Garamont types. They have sprung up verily like mushrooms all over the 20th Century world. Few, if any, of these are copies of my Roman and Italic types. Your "Garamonts" are based upon the Caractères de l'Université, the original punches of which are still carefully guarded in that great printing establishment, the Imprimerie Nationale in Paris. These punches were cut by a fellow named Jannon. However, I am not concerned at the turn history has taken and forsooth I am reasonably flattered. I was the punch cutter *ad astra* of my time. 'Twas I who feathered the nests of publishers everywhere and brought honey to their hives. Printing craftsmen in my time knew my work so well that they named a size of type for me, long before you had your point system to designate all type sizes. After that I could die content as a pauper. Which I did. I thank Mackenzie-Harris Corp., that great typographic concern of Yerba Buena, Alta California (now known as San Francisco, California) for affording me this opportunity of correcting some inaccuracies which have crept into recorded history through the years.

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*Alhambra National Drinking Water, established in 1906*

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# California History

The Magazine of the California Historical Society

winter 1979/80

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#### COVER

In 1895, Horatio Nelson Rust (seated) traveled to Arizona to see the Hopi Snake Dance at Walpi. His companions included Mrs. Thaddeus Lowe, a noted basket collector, and photographers A. C. Vroman (who photographed this scene) and C. J. Crandall. They spent three nights at Sichomovi where they were objects of great curiosity. Behind Mrs. Lowe is the ladder on which she sat to be carried 600 feet to the mesa top. For a portrait of the remarkable Rust, turn to the article beginning on page 304.



JUL 2

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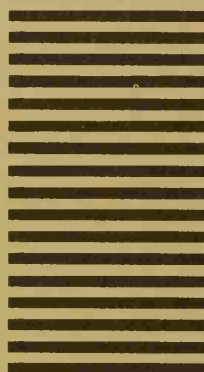


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# California History

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# Engineers and Conservationists

Early twentieth-century reformers sometimes dreamed of creating a harmonious society run by non-partisan technical experts. This society, the progressives believed, would be natural and simple. Machines would relieve the drudgery of work; technical experts would manage

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government and purge inefficiency, corruption, and waste from the political process.<sup>1</sup> With its emphasis on scientific management and on utilization of resources for the benefit of the public, the progressives' conservation movement reflected these underlying beliefs. In fact, in few other fields were the expert, the planner, and the scientist so prominent.<sup>2</sup> Although the idea of conservation of resources was popularized by such political leaders as Theodore Roosevelt as part of a wide-reaching reform program which aimed at "democratizing"



# *in the Progressive Era*

America for the benefit of all its citizens, technical experts were the ones entrusted with the task of giving practical substance to these broad aspirations.<sup>3</sup>

The lengthy national controversy over San Francisco's plan to dam and flood the Hetch Hetchy Valley of Yosemite National Park fully demonstrates the progressive concept of conservation as reform based on scientific management and development of resources for the public's benefit. Not only were the city's plans for the development of Hetch Hetchy prepared by engi-

neers, but its political struggle to win federal approval of the project was managed by the same engineers—in particular by an energetic city employee named Marsden Manson.<sup>4</sup> However, as Manson and others discovered, the Hetch Hetchy controversy also raised for the first time serious questions about the wisdom of the technical experts' definition of conservation and about the easy assumption that the public interest would always be served by placing experts in charge. A look at the role of Manson and other engineers in conceiving and managing



Overleaf: In 1909 members of the Sierra Club hiked the Hetch Hetchy high country to educate themselves about the threatened dam project and to gather photographs of the still largely unexplored region.

the city's campaign to win federal approval of the dam project shows how this particular issue helped to shatter the era's blind faith in pure and righteous expertise. Like other problems of the time, conservation proved to be more complicated than the experts at first realized. No single, obvious, perfect policy could be formulated; rather, the progressives discovered, competing objectives demanded to be balanced and compromised in a process which was essentially political.

A central figure in this controversy was the scientist, engineer, and city employee, Marsden Manson. Born into a comfortable family (his father seems to have been a lawyer) in western Virginia in 1850, Manson earned both bachelor of science and civil engineering degrees from Virginia Military Institute.<sup>5</sup> He later accumulated further scientific credentials by gaining a doctorate in physics and chemistry from the University of California at Berkeley in 1893. As a scientist, his particular interest was climatology, and in addition to a number of papers on the topic, in 1903 he published *The Evolution of Climates*. When reissued in a second edition in 1922, it was described by a reviewer in *Science* as "a notable contribution."<sup>6</sup> Manson thus qualified as a "pure" scientist as well as an engineer.

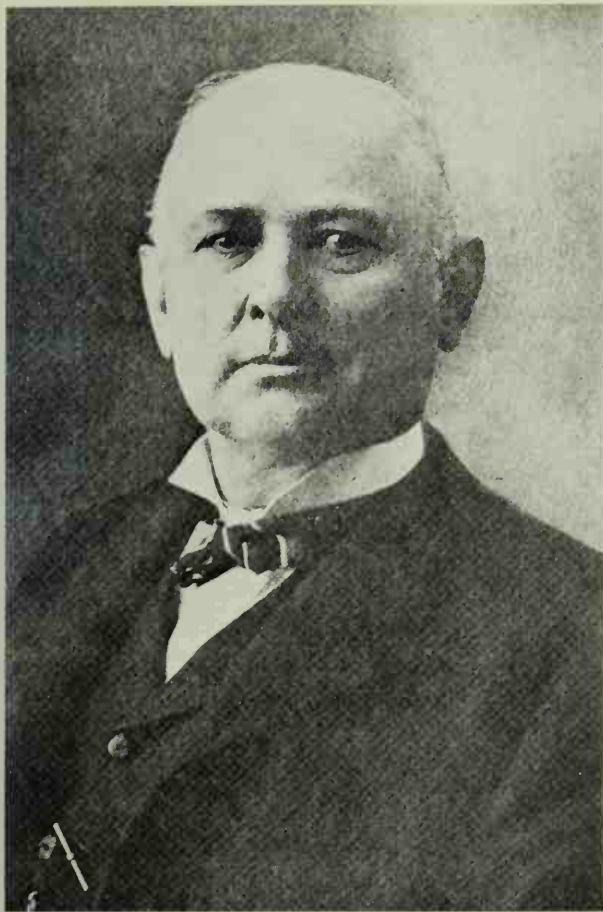
Manson's primary career, however, proved to be that of an engineer. Employed briefly for the federal government as an engineer in Virginia, he moved in 1878 to California, where he began a thirty-four-year engineering career with the state, federal, and city governments. His projects involved both civil and hydraulic engineering and spanned such diverse fields as highway construction, harbor planning, and the design of irrigation and public waterworks systems. Both as a highway planner and as a consultant to state and federal governments on the dumping of mining debris into mountain rivers, he travelled extensively through the Sierra Nevada. Few Californians of his generation could boast so large and intimate knowledge of the state's major mountain range, although after his marriage in 1883, he

lived and worked primarily in San Francisco.<sup>7</sup> Between 1900 and his retirement in 1912, he was employed primarily by the city, first as a member of the Board of Public Works from 1900 to 1903 and as city engineer from 1908 to 1912. His devotion to the city's interests, however, continued even when he was not officially on the payroll.

Manson's travels through the Sierra aroused the engineer's interest in the area's potential for water supplies and hydroelectric power and stimulated his enthusiasm for its beauty as well. Throughout his life, he was an avid outdoorsman, stealing moments to camp in the mountains or to travel in such faraway wilderness areas as Alaska and central Russia. In 1895, Manson joined the young Sierra Club (founded in 1892), which was dedicated to exploring, enjoying, and preserving "the forests and other natural features of the Sierra Nevada Mountains."<sup>8</sup> Some years later the conflict between Manson's interests in the Sierra and those of the majority of the members became obvious, but in the early years no one saw incongruity in a highway and water-development engineer joining the Sierrans.

Manson's involvement in progressive politics grew out of his ties with San Francisco city government. In the mid-1890s, he was employed as a member of a special board of engineers to study the city's drainage system; the board concluded that the city's problems were insoluble unless the city government could win more power from the state legislature so that it could control its own affairs. Exactly the same conclusion had been reached in 1894 by a committee of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors that had been established to recommend a new water supply source for the city, and so, on these very practical issues, a natural alliance developed between the engineers and the politicians. During the late 1890s, the two groups joined forces with others to press the state legislature to issue a new city charter that would require the city to own its utilities and to administer those utilities through a professional Board





*Sierra Club member and city engineer Marsden Manson enthusiastically spearheaded the campaign to dam the Tuolumne River and provide "an unfailing supply of pure water" to San Francisco.*

of Public Works made up of technical experts.<sup>9</sup> In 1900 they won, and the city received a new charter incorporating these reformers' demands. The Democratic reform mayor, James D. Phelan, welcomed the mandate and lost no time in appointing a Board of Public Works that included as one of its three members his friend, Marsden Manson.<sup>10</sup>

When appointed to the Board of Public Works, Manson was just fifty years old and at the height of his career. A man of deceptively ordinary appearance, he concealed behind his meek exterior a prodigious appetite for work, exceptional personal intensity, and a fierce temper. Humorless and unable to relax when engaged in an interesting project, he drove his staff as hard as he drove himself and tried obsessively to oversee and control every phase of the work. His intensity usually won him success, but it strained him and those around him enormously.<sup>11</sup> Partisan and combative, Manson was hardly the detached, impersonal technical expert glori-

fied in progressive mythology, but had he fitted the image better, he might not have been as effective an advocate of the city's cause.

The water problem which came to engross Manson was not new. San Francisco's location on a sandy peninsula in a semi-arid climate zone meant that ever since the days of the gold rush, water had been a crucial—and profitable—concern. By the 1870s one company, the Spring Valley Water Company, had become the city's sole supplier and had assured its monopoly by buying up nearly all of the watershed around the city. This foresight enabled the company to provide the city with enough water for its needs, but it also made it possible for the company to set its own prices. Battles over water rates became annual irritants to the city fathers, but their attempts to secure new water sources were frustrated by the company's political influence and the city government's weakness under the old charter. Not until the new charter was granted in 1900 did the prospects for breaking the company's stranglehold brighten.<sup>12</sup>

Supported by the new charter's mandate that the city own its utilities, the new Board of Public Works, led by City Engineer Carl E. Grunsky, plunged energetically into the problem in 1900. Reviewing earlier proposals for alternative water sources and considering new ones, they gradually reduced the number of possibilities. One option, of course, was to purchase Spring Valley, but the company was not eager to sell at what city officials thought a reasonable price, and in any case the city estimated that within a few years more water would be needed than the company's holdings could provide. If the company could be induced to sell out in the future, the city might buy, but in the meantime the board preferred to find a new source which could supply the city's present and future needs—an estimated 60 million gallons a day—without Spring Valley.

Although several sources were available, including Lake Tahoe in the east, the slopes of Mt. Shasta in the

north, and the Sacramento River in the Central Valley, all of them suffered from drawbacks such as competing claims to the water, inadequate storage, poor water quality, or major technical problems. After the board winnowed out the unattractive proposals, only one possibility remained. As state and federal surveyors had regularly pointed out since 1879, the Tuolumne, which rises in the northern part of Yosemite National Park to become a major tributary of the San Joaquin River, seemed ideally suited to "furnish the city of San Francisco with an unfailing supply of pure water."<sup>14</sup>

The decision to apply to the federal government for permission to use the Hetch Hetchy Valley of the Tuolumne as a reservoir for the city's water was made by city engineers on purely technical grounds. They did not consider whether their proposal violated the letter or spirit of the 1890 act which had included the Hetch Hetchy Valley within Yosemite National Park. On the contrary, the fact that the potential watershed and reservoir site lay within the park was, from their point of view, a great advantage because it diminished the likelihood of competing claims and assured the permanent purity of the water. Although one federal surveyor had earlier described Hetch Hetchy as "a veritable Yosemite Valley on a small scale," a broad, flat river valley with "rugged granite walls, crowned with domes, towers, spires and battlements" "which seemed "to rise almost perpendicularly upon all sides to a height of 2,500 feet above this beautiful emerald meadow," City Engineer Carl Grunsky saw it quite differently. When he visited Hetch Hetchy in the fall of 1900, he was unmoved by the valley's cascades and waterfalls, its luxurious meadows and towering trees; what fascinated him were the valley's elevation of 3,500 feet, which would minimize the need for pumping, and the narrow,

rocky gorge through which the river rushed on its way out of the valley—a perfect site for a dam.<sup>15</sup> Neither aesthetic considerations nor thought about the purpose and function of the park seem to have been raised by anyone in the city government, and had the experts thought of them, such matters would probably have seemed irrelevant.

The main concern of the city officials was not scenery but speculators. Once they agreed that Hetch Hetchy was ideal for their purposes, city leaders moved quickly and secretly to secure additional surveys of the valley and to ask the Interior Department for permission to dam the Tuolumne and flood Hetch Hetchy Valley. While this application was pending, Grunsky drew up plans for a reservoir and aqueduct to supply 60 million gallons of water a day to the Bay Area and for a small generating station to provide electricity for pumping water over the Coast Range.<sup>16</sup> In February of 1901, even before the city asked the government for the Hetch Hetchy site, Congress had passed a Right of Way Act authorizing the sort of development Grunsky had in mind, so by the end of 1902 the way seemed clear for beginning construction during 1903.<sup>17</sup> Having acted with unusual alacrity for a governmental group, San Francisco's leaders now expected to reap the benefits of their foresight and diligence.

Then problems began to develop. In October, 1902, George H. Mendell, president of the Board of Public Works and an early, strong advocate of a Sierra water supply, died, and James Phelan decided not to run for a fourth term as mayor. In February, 1903, Phelan signed over his filing papers for Hetch Hetchy to the city (the original claim had been made in his name to assure secrecy), but the new administration under Mayor Eugene E. Schmitz was not enthusiastic about the Hetch Hetchy project.<sup>18</sup>

The project also faced major obstacles at the national level. In January, 1903, Secretary of the Interior Ethan Allen Hitchcock ruled that the 1890 act which estab-



*In 1903 Hetch Hetchy's emerald meadow grounded granite walls climbing almost perpendicularly 2500 feet above the valley floor.*

lished Yosemite National Park *required* him to protect all of the park's natural features, but that the Right of Way Act of 1901 only *permitted* him to authorize construction of dams and aqueducts. Under the circumstances, Hitchcock decided he could not permit the construction of the proposed reservoir. In fact, a group of engineers appointed by Hitchcock to study transportation needs within the park recommended (unsuccessfully) that the Right of Way Act itself be repealed because, they warned, it would give away too much public land.<sup>19</sup> Contrary to the progressive ideal, then, serious disagreements had erupted among the technical experts, and by 1904 it seemed unlikely the city would ever get what it wanted in Yosemite Park.

Marsden Manson now became the central actor in the play. Early in 1904, Grunsky left San Francisco to become a member of the new Isthmian Canal Commission, and Manson, although no longer on the Board of Public Works, apparently appointed himself chief promoter and lobbyist for the Hetch Hetchy project. Though doubtful about Hetch Hetchy, the new city administration decided to try once again, and so the city issued Manson a memorial asking Congress to authorize the Hetch Hetchy project despite the objections of Secretary Hitchcock. So armed, Manson went to Washington, D.C., but learned that he might have more success working through the executive branch than appealing

to Congress. Rather than asking for legislation, he talked to several administration leaders, including President Theodore Roosevelt's close friend, Chief Forester Gifford Pinchot, Director of the Bureau of Corporations James R. Garfield (appointed secretary of the interior in March of 1907), and eventually the president himself.<sup>20</sup>

Following Manson's visit, Roosevelt questioned his attorney general about Interior Secretary Hitchcock's belief that he was primarily obligated to protect the park. Attorney General W. H. Moody examined the matter and in October informed the president that in his view, the 1901 law was "intended to vest in the Secretary [of the Interior] a discretionary authority to grant or refuse applications of this kind." Thus the decision became entirely a matter of executive judgment, and a delighted Manson reinstated the city's petition for Hetch Hetchy, convinced that with the president's support it would be approved.<sup>21</sup>

Manson's 1905 visit to Washington produced the first strong interest in and support for the project on the part of major national leaders, and perhaps even more importantly, it brought the proposal under the general umbrella of "conservation." What had previously been only a water project now became a symbol of the progressive conservation policy—resources should be saved only until they could be developed for the public's





welfare. For Manson's new allies on the national level, the Hetch Hetchy proposal acquired symbolic importance which excluded consideration of possible alternatives: because the proposed dam was within a national park, the Interior Department's authorization would prove conservation did not mean locking up resources forever. The desire to demonstrate that point would soon become a major determinant of the Roosevelt administration's policy.

In the spring of 1905, however, Manson returned to San Francisco to find that in his absence the city government had again lost interest in the Hetch Hetchy proposal. Reopening the water question, the Board of Supervisors advertised for new proposals to supply the city with water and authorized the appointment of a three-man committee of engineers to examine and evaluate new possibilities: Manson managed to get himself appointed to the new committee, but it soon became apparent that it was intended only as a respectable cover for Schmitz and his colleagues' corrupt plans. In Jan-

uary, 1906, the Board of Supervisors, arguing that delays in winning federal approval and opposition from Central Valley irrigationists in the Modesto-Turlock area made the Hetch Hetchy scheme impractical, voted to drop it. The engineers, including Manson, were now directed to report only on other possibilities. Although protesting vigorously against the board's decision, Manson went quickly to work, and on February 7 he submitted adverse reports on a Mokelumne River proposal and on a project proposed by the Bay Cities Water Company.<sup>22</sup> This latter report was a nasty jolt to Schmitz and his cronies, who had already worked out lucrative and illegal arrangements to award Bay Cities the city's water contract. Now they had to find a way to circumvent Manson's objections.

On April 18, 1906, the great earthquake and fire leveled San Francisco and incidentally provided Schmitz and his friends with a plausible excuse for claiming that a new water supply had become an emergency priority. Manson, who was assisting the reconstruction effort as

*President Theodore Roosevelt (right) and John Muir (left) visited Yosemite Valley in 1903. In following years Roosevelt was attacked for wanting to lock up natural resources rather than develop them for use.*

a volunteer member of the Water Supply and Fire Protection Committee, agreed that the situation had become more urgent but still claimed to be unimpressed with the Bay Cities' plans. In July his opinion was confirmed by yet another committee of engineers that had been appointed to restudy the problem. This group reported that no proposal was sufficiently compelling to be recommended without a full study of all of them, a process that the committee estimated would take at least a year. Schmitz and the supervisors, declaring that any such delay was out of the question, thereupon voted to ignore the committee's advice and accept the Bay Cities proposal. When the engineers resigned in protest over this decision, their action encouraged an investigation that brought Schmitz and sixteen members of the Board of Supervisors to trial for graft, long before the Bay Cities project could get underway.<sup>23</sup>

By the fall of 1906, the prospects for approval of the Hetch Hetchy project were brightening. The graft prosecution was formally inaugurated in October, while word came from Washington that Roosevelt favored the city's application and that Pinchot was urging Manson to press it.<sup>24</sup> What had happened was that the Hetch Hetchy project had now taken on a certain urgency at the national level because Roosevelt and Pinchot found their conservation policy under attack from critics who charged that it was intended to lock up resources permanently. To counter those attacks, Pinchot had begun planning a White House Conference on the Conservation of Natural Resources which was to emphasize the theme of development of resources for public use, and Roosevelt seized the opportunity offered by the resignation of Secretary Hitchcock in March of 1907 to appoint in his place a man more committed to using resources, James R. Garfield.<sup>25</sup> Under the circumstances, San Francisco's Hetch Hetchy application offered an ideal way to show that even in the national parks, resources would be developed in the public interest.

But if the national atmosphere was perfect from the

city's point of view, problems still existed at the local level. Despite the beginning of the graft prosecutions, Schmitz and his cronies held onto their offices and blocked the Board of Supervisors from reinstating the city's request for permission to use Hetch Hetchy. Manson chafed at the delay, fearing that the national situation would change or that speculators would file on the Hetch Hetchy reservoir site while the city's claim was in abeyance. In the hope of applying pressure to the supervisors, he urged the elite San Francisco Commonwealth Club to support the Hetch Hetchy project, but the members, who agreed that a Sierra water supply was desirable, cautiously declined to endorse a specific proposal.<sup>26</sup> Not until July of 1907 was Schmitz finally forced out, and on July 22, the new Board of Supervisors immediately reinstated the application for use of Hetch Hetchy. Five days later, on July 27, Secretary Garfield came to town during an inspection tour of the West and held a hearing on the city's request. Mayor Edward R. Taylor hastily appointed Manson and Phelan to represent the city before the secretary, and they welcomed the opportunity.<sup>27</sup> Arguing vigorously that the secretary needed only to consider specific objections to the Hetch Hetchy proposal, not possible alternatives, they succeeded in narrowing the scope of the hearing so that when Garfield returned to Washington, city officials were confident that they would be awarded what they sought.<sup>28</sup> At last it looked as though the city would have a new water supply.

Following the July hearing, Mayor Taylor asked Manson to become the city engineer. Grunsky wanted his old position back, but Taylor preferred Manson, whom he shrewdly recognized as "very zealous in the City's interest." After some haggling over salary, the appointment was announced in January, 1908. In the newspapers which supported the Hetch Hetchy project, the choice was praised as evidence of the new administration's commitment and determination.<sup>29</sup>

Manson, of course, rejoiced in the challenge and

opportunity before him and plunged into his duties with his usual gusto. He prepared replies to the claims of irrigationists in the Central Valley that they had a prior right to the Tuolumne waters, and in April he went to Washington, D.C., to press the city's case. There he conferred at length with Secretary Garfield, and by the end of April he had worked out an arrangement under which the city would guarantee water for irrigation and agree to develop subsidiary reservoirs at Lake Eleanor and Cherry Valley before building a dam at Hetch Hetchy. This arrangement pacified the irrigationists, and on May 11—two days before the White House conservation conference—Garfield issued a permit to the city to begin construction of the project. Then Manson returned to San Francisco to begin a frantic summer's work, which included drafting detailed plans for the new project, arranging for surveys, buying options on privately owned lands in the area, shepherding a party of supervisors over the site, and preparing the specifications for a proposed bond issue to finance the first phases of the project.<sup>30</sup>

As Manson worked, the first public opposition to the city's plans began to develop. So secretly had the early phases of the city's campaign been conducted that it was not until 1905 that members of the Sierra Club became aware of the possible threat to Yosemite Park. At that point the club was absorbed in a campaign to persuade the state legislature that Yosemite Valley, then a state park, should be turned over to the federal government for inclusion in Yosemite National Park, where it would be safer against encroachment. Until that struggle was won in 1906, the club had little energy for other causes. Nor did the matter seem especially urgent before 1907 because of Secretary Hitchcock's refusal to issue a reservoir permit. Although Gifford Pinchot's support for

the project was an ominous sign, John Muir and his friends in the Sierra Club could not imagine that their old ally, Theodore Roosevelt, would permit the defilement of the national park. After Secretary Garfield's hearing in San Francisco, Muir warned that the contest was likely to be "the worst ever," but he remained confident that "if we can keep the protests flying we are sure to win."<sup>31</sup> Muir gravely underestimated the seriousness of the situation.

In essence, the case presented by Muir and other advocates hoping to preserve Hetch Hetchy rested on aesthetic considerations only. Teachers, lawyers, lecturers, and writers predominated in the group, and they showed little sensitivity either to the political realities which pushed Roosevelt to endorse the reservoir project unless he felt opposition from the people of California, or to the pragmatic, multiple-use arguments advanced by the engineers.<sup>32</sup> Thus when the Sierra Club's board of directors voted in September, 1907, to send a resolution to Secretary Garfield stating their views, their argument emphasized the "beauty" and "grandeur" of Hetch Hetchy and its importance for "pleasure-camping." To the city's contention that Hetch Hetchy offered unique advantages in cost and water quality, they weakly replied only that equally good water was available elsewhere, though they did not say where and admitted that the cost of obtaining it would be greater than from Hetch Hetchy.<sup>33</sup> Without realizing it, they were conceding the enemy's strongest point.

Their aesthetic arguments failed to appeal to those who were supporting the project or those who had to make the crucial decisions in Washington, and the park lovers were also woefully inept even in their occasional use of technical data. For example, one of the arguments advanced by opponents of the Hetch Hetchy project during 1907 and 1908 was that use of the valley as a reservoir would necessitate closing all of the watershed—most of the park—to campers in order to avoid pollution. This was a ludicrous charge. As city representatives



pointed out, reservoirs were commonly built without danger in areas far more populous than Yosemite would ever be. What was more, when urging rejection of Hetch Hetchy, the park lovers were necessarily arguing that the city should draw its water from some other area where the watershed would surely be less protected than in Yosemite. Realizing that their "pollution" argument weakened their own case, they eventually dropped it.<sup>34</sup> In the meantime, however, they had demonstrated their scientific ignorance and made themselves ridiculous to people for whom scientific-technical considerations were decisive.

Yet if the preservationists' arguments were not always persuasive, their efforts to mobilize public opposition to the Hetch Hetchy proposal did affect Washington. In the fall of 1908, San Francisco asked Congress to allow it to exchange city-owned lands outside the proposed reservoir sites for federally-owned lands within them, as the Garfield permit for construction required. The nature lovers saw this as an opportunity to attack the permit from the rear and decided to concentrate their efforts on blocking the legislation in Congress. They organized a vigorous campaign to arouse public opinion and combined that with what Sierra Clubber William Colby called "effective work on the members of committees having the matter in charge." Although these efforts made progress, they heavily taxed the strength and wallets of the small group of men who led the fight. "How this business Hetch-hetches one's time," Muir lamented. "It won't even let me sleep."<sup>35</sup>

Hearings on the proposed legislation opened in Washington in December of 1908. Manson and Supervisor A. H. Giannini were there to present the city's case, while the opposition was represented by Spring Valley's lawyers and some preservationists, whom Manson sarcastically characterized as "a number of prominent eastern gentlemen, some of whom were actually acquainted with the subject." The congressmen, however, were impressed by the flood of letters and

telegrams that the nature lovers produced, and in January, 1909, Manson and Giannini had to ask the House committee for a delay while they brought in reinforcements from San Francisco. These new efforts eventually produced a favorable report on the proposed bill from the House committee, but nevertheless by mid-February it seemed that the Senate committee would offer an adverse report.<sup>36</sup>

Manson believed that Spring Valley's opposition was the main cause of the Senate opposition, rather than the efforts of "misguided sentimentalists and enthusiasts," but in any case he recognized the necessity for a change in tactics. Asking the Senate sponsors of the bill to withdraw it to avoid open defeat, he exploited outgoing Secretary Garfield's sympathy to secure a series of permits that Manson believed would allow the city to go ahead with construction without congressional action. By April the engineer was satisfied that he had all the authority he needed to begin work, and during the spring and summer of 1909 he prepared detailed cost estimates on the project while pressing forward negotiations with Spring Valley for the purchase of the company by the city. If a pair of proposed bond issues to fund the Hetch Hetchy project and buy Spring Valley were approved by the city's voters in January, 1910, Manson felt certain that at last his political troubles would be over.<sup>37</sup>

In fact, however, they were just beginning. In March, 1909, Roosevelt gave up the White House to William Howard Taft, and Secretary Garfield passed the Interior Department to the care of Richard Achilles Ballinger. Preservationists, who had won a tenuous victory with the blocking of the city's bill in February, now laid plans to consolidate their success by asking Ballinger to rescind the Garfield permit for construction of the reservoir. They wrote a series of articles to publicize the issue and organized a letter-writing campaign, and in April the conservation organizations formally petitioned the new secretary to revoke the permit. That fall, while

*While the Sierra Club issued jeremiads about Hetch Hetchy's beauty and importance for pleasure camping, city officials stressed the unique cost and water quality advantages of a dam across the Tuolumne River.*

Ballinger still pondered the case, John Muir accomplished some vigorous lobbying while conducting the president and secretary of the interior on a tour of Yosemite Park and reported enthusiastically that "everything looks promising for our side of the fight. . . ." <sup>38</sup> Evidently the city had not won yet.

As 1909 waned, Manson's optimism slipped away. In November he discovered that the construction permits he had secured from Garfield earlier in the year did not give the city sufficient authority to begin building dams. Early in January, 1910, with the special bond election just a few days away, more blows fell. After a long and acrimonious battle between Ballinger and Pinchot over Alaskan conservation policy, Taft fired Chief Forester Pinchot and thus deprived the city of its most influential friend in the administration. At the same time San Francisco's new mayor, P. H. McCarthy, joined with the city's labor unions in recommending that the voters defeat the bond issue intended to raise money to buy Spring Valley; the price, the mayor said, was exorbitant. When the election was held on January 14, the voters approved \$45 million worth of bonds for the Hetch Hetchy project but defeated the proposal to buy the water company. Despondent at these reverses, Manson told former Secretary Garfield that he believed his own city service was over and that the new city administration would give up Hetch Hetchy. <sup>39</sup>

His opponents, however, were having troubles too. Although the preservationists had long resented charges that their efforts were being financed by Spring Valley, the company's well-paid lawyers had been useful if somewhat unappealing allies. However, when the company and city at last reached a purchase agreement—even though the purchase did not then go through—the company quietly shifted sides, abandoning its opposition to the Hetch Hetchy project and working with the city to ensure that the purchase would be eventually approved.

Moreover, at the same time that they were losing the

water company's help, the preservationists found their own ranks splitting. Within both of the major organizations opposing the project, the Sierra Club and the eastern Appalachian Mountain Club, serious differences had existed for some time over the merits of the Hetch Hetchy proposal. San Franciscans, of course, had a practical interest in acquiring a dependable water supply, but as the split in the eastern club indicated, the issue posed a problem for all conservationists. In the Hetch Hetchy controversy the young conservation movement confronted for the first time a dilemma: in a conflict between development and preservation of dwindling resources, what criteria should determine policy? Up to this point most conservationists, like other Americans, had shared the frontier attitude that resources were unlimited and needed merely to be developed wisely in the public's interest. Only a handful of visionaries like John Muir suggested that conservation ought to include the permanent preservation of some resources in a natural state, and this argument was rarely clearly articulated. Although the preservationists did win some notable achievements—especially the beginning of a national park system—because "locking up" a few scenic areas did not threaten the interests of developers, the Hetch Hetchy issue was one of the first national questions to make clear the conflicting aims of the two wings of the conservation movement: planned development versus preservation. In truth, although both sides in the struggle freely accused each other of being in league with the devil, the conflict was more a civil war than a fight against external enemies. For the first time, basic goals of the conservation movement were being debated, and the split at the top which began with John Muir and Gifford Pinchot soon extended downward throughout nearly every conservation organization. As it developed, the issue became a question of whether the public's interests would be better served by keeping the valley as a recreation area for future generations (few people had then struggled over its rugged and perilous trails), or





whether it would serve the public better as a reservoir and source of electrical power for people living in the San Francisco region. On such questions reasonable men could and did differ, with the result that the conservation organizations found themselves locked in bitter debate just when they most needed unity. Eventually, Muir and those who agreed with him were able to defeat their rivals or to patch together new organizations to carry on the fight against the city, but in so doing they permanently lost some former allies and weakened their ability to exploit the defects in the city's case.<sup>40</sup>

Ready or not, the crisis was upon them. On February 25, 1910, Secretary Ballinger at long last came to his decision and issued an order requiring San Francisco to show cause why the Garfield permit for reservoir construction should not be revoked. Both the city and its opponents, Ballinger ordered, should be prepared to present their cases to him in Washington in May.<sup>41</sup>

"Ballinger's bombshell" delighted preservationists,

and they redoubled their efforts to make their "temporary victory . . . permanent. . ." "The H.Hy. fight is soon to grow hot," John Muir observed, "but all signs now seem to spell victory for our side."<sup>42</sup> To assure that victory, the Californians wisely took up a suggestion which had been made by Harriet Monroe of Chicago in 1909 and began looking for an engineer to support their case at the hearing. After some inquiry, Muir and his friends found Philip E. Harroun of Berkeley, who was willing to take on the job for the substantial fee of \$1050. Since the engineer's fee had to come out of the pockets of Muir and his friends, their willingness to pay the sum indicates that they had at last become aware of the importance of technical considerations in Washington's decision.<sup>43</sup> Unfortunately, however, they did not choose wisely in selecting Harroun as their expert.

Ballinger's show-cause order aroused Manson's combative instincts and snapped him out of his depression.



Determined to rout those he described as "the so-called nature-loving societies . . . composed largely of short-haired women and long-haired men," he looked for a way to attack his enemies. Checking into the background of Ballinger's order, he found that it was based upon an extremely negative report on Hetch Hetchy from two Reclamation Bureau engineers, E. G. Hopson and Louis C. Hill, who had been ordered to study the proposal by Secretary Ballinger after his visit to the valley in the fall of 1909. Hopson and Hill were busy men, so they in turn had passed the task on to an independent consultant, Philip Harroun, who wrote the report which bore Hopson's and Hill's names. That would have been all right, except that Harroun was at the same time working for the Spring Valley Company, which had an obvious interest in seeing the Hetch Hetchy project blocked. Harroun had failed to inform Hill and Hopson (or Muir) of this conflict of interest, but he told Manson about it in March, 1910, because he was furious that Hill and Hopson had not paid him for his report.<sup>44</sup> Of course, Manson was pleased with this information, and when Harroun, whose ethical standards seem to have been flexible at best, agreed to represent the preservationists at the May hearing, Manson felt confident that he could nullify any advantage the nature lovers might have had.

So it proved. The hearings held on May 25-27 seemed but a solemn farce played for the benefit of the public. As they began, Manson revealed his embarrassing knowledge to Secretary Ballinger, "and without waiving any rights to bring it out later on, permitted the Secretary to act as his best judgment indicated." The result of this discreet blackmail was a ruling by Ballinger on May 27 that, if it did not give the city all it wanted, undeniably blighted the preservationists' hopes for permanent protection of Hetch Hetchy. The city, Ballinger ordered, must prepare and submit to a special three-man advisory board of army engineers a new study of the Hetch Hetchy proposal and new reports on all

available alternative water supplies. On the basis of the advisory board's evaluation of these reports, the secretary would decide whether or not to permit the project to go ahead.<sup>45</sup>

Both the hearings and Ballinger's order again underscore the importance of technical considerations in determining the Hetch Hetchy project's fate. The hearings themselves were divided into two parts. One part held before the secretary himself consisted largely of dramatic and emotional statements from preservationists; the other, before the special board, concentrated on technical testimony. The preservationists clearly put their main efforts, direct testimony and the submission of extensive briefs, into the first part of the hearings. The city paid little attention to the public hearings and stressed the testimony before the special board.<sup>46</sup> These different approaches summed up each side's view of the most important issues and of the basis upon which the final decision would and should be made. The preservationists naively assumed that public ire would prevent desecration of a national park. The city's leaders recognized that there were many publics, not just one, and that the officials who had to make the final decision wanted to make it on practical, easily defensible arguments, not sentiment. Not only were the officials themselves impressed by technical arguments, but they expected that the public at large would be, too. Manson's strategy was therefore doubly clever: he discredited the preservationists' only technical witness and concentrated his own efforts as an engineer where they were most effective.

For Secretary Ballinger, the Hetch Hetchy issue represented a political minefield to be traversed with the utmost caution. Following his visit with Muir to the valley, his personal sympathies seem to have been with the preservationists, but political realism dictated caution. Having recently suffered a bruising public fight with Chief Forester Gifford Pinchot over Alaskan public land leases, Ballinger knew that the administration was

in serious trouble with westerners, among whom Pinchot's advocacy of the development of resources and multiple use of public lands was very popular, and he had no desire to worsen the situation unnecessarily during an election year.<sup>47</sup> For the secretary, the idea of postponing a decision and sharing responsibility with the special board of army engineers offered a most attractive way out of a difficult situation.

The combatants were understandably less enthusiastic about the secretary's inspiration. The preservationists, who had been confident of victory and did not know that their star witness Harroun had double-crossed them, were puzzled about the new delay of a final decision but tried to put the best possible face on the matter. "I think the outcome of our Hetch-Hetchy fight is under the circumstances the best possible," wrote John Muir hopefully, "for it seems that in a year from now the whole affair will reach a final settlement which will probably put an end to the work of thieves and robbers in the Yosemite Park. . . ." The preservationists, however, could not afford to sustain a campaign like the one they had been waging for the past two years.<sup>48</sup> For the city, on the other hand, the secretary's order meant a new, expensive study of the problem, more delays, and the possibility that a whole decade's time, money, and effort would be wasted. City officials reluctantly hired a consulting engineer recommended by President Taft, John R. Freeman, to prepare a new report, but throughout 1910 and most of 1911, they made little serious effort to get the required study under way.<sup>49</sup>

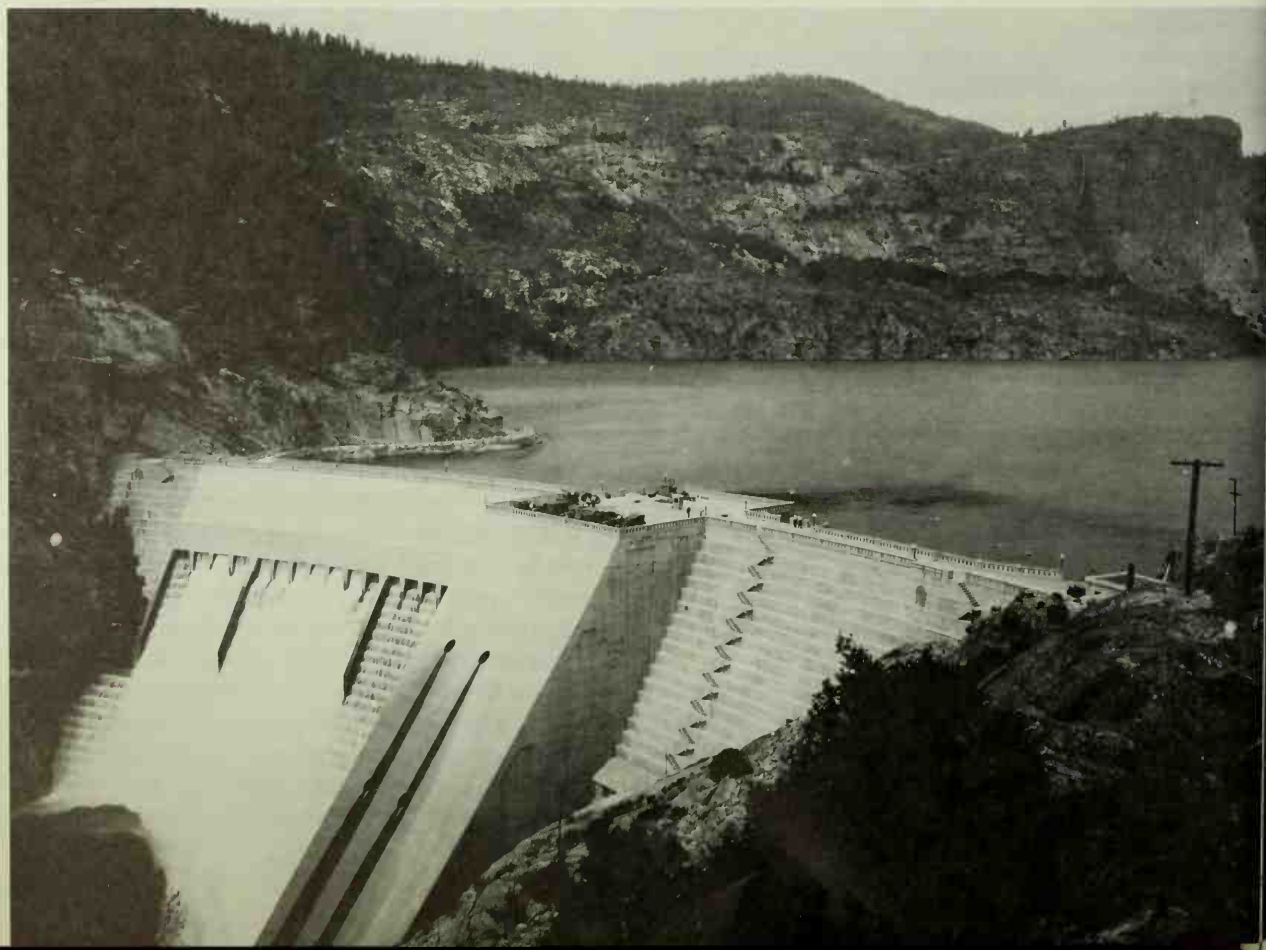
*T*he strain of the delay was especially wearing on Marsden Manson. Having for so long carried almost the full weight of the city's case, he was made more irritable and anxious by the new delay. Never very charitable to his opponents, he now lashed out at them in print as

"mistaken zealots" and "catpaws" of the "grasping interests"—charges for which he had not a shred of evidence. Privately he suspected that Ballinger's show-cause order of February, 1910, had been the result of a conspiracy with the preservationists, and he drafted an intemperate letter to Theodore Roosevelt charging the former president with the "colossal blunder" of supporting the "present administration." Gifford Pinchot persuaded him not to send this diatribe which would probably have destroyed the city's case, but he did send equally bitter letters to other politicians.<sup>50</sup> By the spring of 1911, his letters had become so abusive that his old friend James Phelan warned him to exercise a little caution. "I cannot use your letter," Phelan wrote at one point, "for it would excite antagonism." "Permit me to say," he added, "that a prominent official in Washington and a friend of yours sometime since said, 'Tell Mr. Manson not to write letters as he has been doing, for his style irritates.' So I take the liberty of suggesting a more conciliatory epistolary correspondence."<sup>51</sup> This well-meant advice, however, had little effect on the engineer, whose self-control seemed to be slipping away.

By September, 1911, Manson seemed perversely bent on destroying his own case. When Secretary of the Interior Walter L. Fisher (Ballinger had resigned in March) traveled west on an inspection tour, he chose Manson as his guide to Hetch Hetchy rather than Muir, who had courted him ardently all spring.<sup>52</sup> Although this seemed the perfect opportunity for the engineer to consolidate the city's position, J. Horace McFarland, an eastern preservationist who accompanied the group, reported that Manson seemed determined to antagonize the secretary. His "prolixity of words and disposition to pass beyond the strict limits of the truth," McFarland thought, weakened Fisher's original sympathy for the city's case. In particular, the secretary was shocked by Manson's grandiose talk of damming other streams for additional storage. Skeptically he inquired, "What other



*Damming the Tuolumne gorge flooded the valley under a deep lake of fluctuating depths. Visible in the distance in the photographs showing both the dam site and the eventual dam is spectacular Wapama Falls. Note the people and cars standing atop the dam named after Manson's successor as city engineer, Maurice O'Shaughnessy.*





valleys in the Yosemite, Mr. Manson, is it the idea of the city of San Francisco to absorb?"<sup>53</sup> Listening in the background, McFarland applauded silently and concluded that all was not yet lost.

During 1912 the signs of strain which McFarland and others had noted in Manson grew more severe. As the city's long-delayed study of Hetch Hetchy and other projects finally got seriously under way, Manson reported that he was "devoting from 12 to 14 hours a day to work and then dancing attendance to Committees between 8 and 11 P.M." Such labors, he admitted, were "not conducive to that equable frame of mind desirable when undertaking difficult problems." Indeed, the engineer's judgment may have been none too sound during this period.<sup>54</sup> An earthquake-proofing plan which he approved for the Twin Peaks reservoir, for example, proved to be defective, and the structure later had to be rebuilt. San Franciscans who lived in the shadow of a leaky reservoir atop the city's highest hills and city officials who suffered Manson's outbursts of temper no doubt felt relief when the engineer finally resigned in June. Wracked by chronic insomnia and indigestion, he found it impossible to see through to final approval the project to which he had devoted his life for a dozen years. Resting and gradually recuperating at a camp in the country, he watched the final stages of the Hetch Hetchy battle with a detachment which was poignant proof of his total exhaustion.<sup>55</sup>

Manson's collapse in the summer of 1912 was not the disaster for San Francisco it might once have been because by that time others were ready to take up where he left off. His old friend Carl Grunsky filled in temporarily as city engineer until a new and enthusiastic replacement, Maurice M. O'Shaughnessy, could take over in September.<sup>56</sup> With consulting engineer John R.

Freeman, Grunsky and O'Shaughnessy put together a new and devastating presentation of the city's case. Laden with technical erudition and presented with propagandistic skill, Freeman's *Report* followed lines already well established by Manson in emphasizing the necessity and desirability of the Hetch Hetchy project and denigrating all possible alternatives. The army advisory board was bowled over by it, and so were most members of Congress who were eventually asked to approve a bill giving the city federal approval to dam and flood Hetch Hetchy Valley. With President Woodrow Wilson's signature on the Raker Act in December of 1913, Marsden Manson's long political battle was at last completed, and construction could finally begin.<sup>57</sup>

Manson's central role in the long struggle for Hetch Hetchy spanned three city and two federal administrations. In the progressive era, he and his contemporaries assumed that his dual role as expert and political mover was not only normal but highly desirable. It represented a mechanism by which the abuses of corrupt politicians and special interests could be checked and urban government made to serve the needs of the people.

Or was it? As historian Samuel P. Hays has pointed out, there was a marked contrast between the era's "ideology of a popular upheaval against a selfish few" and its practice of "shaping the structure of municipal government so that political power would no longer be broadly distributed, but would in fact be more centralized in the hands of a relatively small segment of the population."<sup>58</sup> In effect, Hays argues, progressive-era municipal reform was a device for shifting political power from lower and middle class politicians to upper-middle and upper class business leaders, technicians, and professionals—men who exercised an enormous economic influence in their society but felt politically impotent. The rhetoric of their struggle was democratic and anti-business, but its reality was elitist.

The Hetch Hetchy controversy, however, does not fit Hays' theory any better than it fits the idealized con-

ception of an unselfish crusade by the majority against the privileged few. On both sides there existed elements of selfishness and altruism, and what is more, the contest crossed class and interest lines.

Even two generations later it is difficult to determine to what extent participants in the struggle were motivated by selfish and unselfish concerns. The Spring Valley company's motives were perhaps the clearest, in that the company consistently followed economic self-interest and switched sides according to its estimate of where profit lay. All other participants were led by murkier combinations of motives. Muir and the preservationists certainly fought for the recreational and aesthetic interests of future generations, but surely they were influenced also by their selfish desire to save for their own enjoyment a choice hiking and camping area that few other Americans had ever seen. Manson and other engineers on the project were moved partly by a conviction that they were serving the city's interests and partly by such base emotions as stubbornness and vindictiveness and ambition. Phelan, Giannini, and other businessmen favoring the dam proposal sought partly to benefit all San Franciscans and partly to increase their own profits by encouraging urban growth. Hays' analysis is useful in stripping away the mask of disinterested altruism with which progressive-era reformers often cloaked common human motives, but it runs the risk of substituting one oversimplification for another.

Equally, it should be noted that the Hetch Hetchy issue was not an issue used by the new elite against the old politicians. In San Francisco, the reformers had nearly defeated the old regime before Hetch Hetchy became an issue, though the Schmitz administration marked a brief resurgence of the old ways. The water debate was more a quarrel among the victors than a part of the war between the reformers and the old guard, and members of the professional elite led both sides. Many of them were members of the Sierra Club or the Commonwealth Club, and they shared common back-

grounds, educations, and values. Doubtless this was partly why they found their differences so perplexing and aggravating. Contrary to what Hays seems to suggest, victory by the progressives did not guarantee their unity on subsequent issues.

Finally, the implication in Hays' argument that the rise of a professional elite to power meant that the broader public's interests were sacrificed to the aims of the privileged few is unfounded in this case. Rather, the Hetch Hetchy debate suggests that the professionals were far more aware of the importance of the issue than the old-style politicians like Schmitz and that they were more able to understand and more willing to articulate the issues for the public than traditional politicians. Rather than eliminating public debate, the rise of the progressive elite in San Francisco opened a whole new area for public discussion.

Another interpretive theory which needs to be supplemented in light of the Hetch Hetchy case is J. Leonard Bates' argument that the concept uniting the progressive conservation movement was "hatred of the boodler, the rank materialist, the exploiter."<sup>59</sup> Such rhetoric was used, but what public figures would admit admiration of boodlers, materialists, and exploiters? Thus, it is important to look closely at what progressive conservationists did as well as what they said. The Hetch Hetchy controversy demonstrated that bitter differences rankled within the conservation movement on the matter of goals. Between Gifford Pinchot's contention that "the first principle of conservation is development, the use of natural resources now existing on this continent for the benefit of the people who live here now," and John Muir's belief that Hetch Hetchy should be kept in natural wildness forever was an unbridgeable gulf fully as great as that between the boodlers and the conservationists.<sup>60</sup> Because progressive conservationists, too, often defined their aim only as opposition to wasteful exploitation, it is understandable that each faction felt that the other must share its viewpoint unless it had

sold out. Bates' interpretation does not take account of the division between developmental and preservationist conservationists, nor explain why the developmental conservationists were more influential than the preservationists. Conservation as Pinchot defined it was popular with most politicians during the progressive period because it sounded democratic and responsible without threatening any important interests or calling for any sacrifices. Muir's Hetch Hetchy position, on the other hand, raised disquieting questions about the purposes of conservation, threatened vested interests, and challenged the comfortable assumption that development guaranteed progress. Small wonder that most political leaders were more comfortable with Pinchot and Manson than with Muir.

Marsden Manson was well able to exploit the national political climate on the Hetch Hetchy issue. As an engineer, he commanded the credentials of an expert planner of development; his personal zeal and tireless lobbying made him an effective political force. Equally important was the fact that both the Roosevelt and Taft administrations came under fire, especially from westerners, for withdrawing too many resources from development. Both presidents were eager to show their concern for the West's interests, and the Hetch Hetchy proposal offered them a dramatic opportunity to do so. How better could they indicate sympathy for the West's chronic water problems than by turning over a useless valley in a national park to the city of San Francisco? Theodore Roosevelt apparently agreed from the outset with Gifford Pinchot that unless the people of California opposed the development, it ought to be permitted. Taft, on the other hand, argued that he could not approve the project unless Congress specifically mandated it. In fact, he found himself in danger of having to disapprove it and alienate the West, though there is no

evidence he had strong personal objections to it.<sup>61</sup> In the end, however, both presidents chose to base their policy on the advice and guidance of the technical experts. In so doing, they cleared their consciences, satisfied a large part of the public which was greatly impressed by technical arguments, and of course played straight into the hands of Marsden Manson. Thus, the combination of the national political climate, the prevailing admiration for the opinions of the technical expert, and the vigor and expertise of Manson worked together to give the city what it had sought.

The opponents of the Hetch Hetchy project never really grasped the crucial function of the experts in the political process. Thus they misunderstood, or worse, ignored the experts' arguments; they made elementary technical blunders; they seldom sought competent technical advice; and they defended the wilderness with a romantic and aesthetic argument which made them vulnerable to charges of sentimentality and elitism. Three decades later the distinguished naturalist Aldo Leopold would begin to develop "a philosophical, religious and ethical point of view based on pragmatic scientific grounds" which would have offered a far better argument for the preservation of Hetch Hetchy than the "mystical intimacy with nature" advocated by John Muir and his allies in this struggle—but by then the valley was deep under water.<sup>62</sup>

Of course, the preservationists could not present an ecological argument which did not yet exist, so for the most part they relied on lobbying and on keeping "letters flying in a country-wide storm thick as snowflakes," as Muir put it.<sup>63</sup> This approach was sound in theory, but it failed here because the massive public outrage on which Muir counted did not materialize. The developmental and technical arguments advanced by the city engineers were more familiar and persuasive to most people.

Because the idea of conservation was new to the generation a step away from the frontiersman's constant





By 1919, a bond issue had secured \$5,570,000 for construction of the Hetch Hetchy dam. Here, graced by a sign noting the city's determination, city officials including engineer O'Shaughnessy (front row, third from left) commemorate the sale of the bonds. The dam was completed in 1923.

war with nature, conservationists tended to assume they all wanted the same things. Muir and Manson both remained active members of the Sierra Club throughout most of the controversy, and each seemed to hope that the other might be won over to his point of view.<sup>64</sup> Adding further to the confusion was the lofty rhetoric of progressivism.<sup>65</sup> Only when preservationists were forced to choose between wilderness or progress, as in the Hetch Hetchy case, did a basic disagreement become apparent, and neither side was really ready to cope with the implications of that discovery. For most Americans, the idea of slowing urban industrialization to save a bit of wilderness was inconceivable, and even Muir and his followers were more Luddites than prophets of ecology. Having dared to attack the sacred notions of progress and development, they had little to offer in their place except mystical romanticism.

The problem posed by the Hetch Hetchy confrontation did not disappear with the flooding of the valley. Obscured for the moment, it has consistently reemerged as one of the major issues confronting twentieth-century Americans: Is the nation's natural heritage sufficiently valuable to be worth preserving at the cost of restricting growth and development? Our own generation may understand the question more clearly than our grandfathers did, but we, like they, find it hard to accept the material sacrifices that preservation requires.

The opening photograph of the Sierra Club and the 1903 view of Hetch Hetchy are courtesy the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. The Manson portrait is reproduced from the *Overland Monthly*, August, 1906, page 19. All the other photographs are from the CHS Library.

## Notes

1. David W. Noble, *The Progressive Mind, 1890-1917* (Chicago, 1970), pp. 37-47; Samuel Haber, *Efficiency and Uplift: Scientific Management in the Progressive Era, 1890-1920* (Chicago, 1964), pp. ix-x, 104-116.
2. Samuel P. Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890-1920* (Atheneum ed., N.Y., 1966).
3. J. Leonard Bates, "Fulfilling American Democracy: The Conservation Movement, 1907 to 1921," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 44 (June, 1957): 29-57.
4. Striking if inexact parallels exist between Manson's role in this issue and that of Frederick Law Olmsted in an earlier period. See the stimulating essay by Geoffrey Blodgett, "Frederick Law Olmsted: Landscape Architecture as Conservative Reform," *Journal of American History*, 62 (March, 1976): 869-889.
5. The evidence about Manson's family background is confusing. Two autobiographical notes preserved in a file of Manson letters and other documents in the Registrar's Office at Virginia Military Institute are contradictory. One identifies Manson's father as Nathaniel J. Manson, a lawyer, the other as Robert Emmet Manson. The first further identifies R. E. Manson as Marsden Manson's brother; the second says that Nathaniel Manson was Marsden's paternal grandfather.
6. A general biography of Manson is in *Who Was Who in America*,

- I, 1897-1942 (Chicago, 1942), p. 774. The review by F. H. Knowlton appeared in *Science*, 56 (September 1, 1922): 254-255. Copies of the book and of Manson's other scientific papers are in the Marsden Manson Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.
7. For a detailed description of Manson's mountain travels, see Manson to Professor [?] McAdie, December 9, 1907, Manson Papers.
8. For the early history of the club, see Marshall Kuhn, "The Sierra Club: Remembering the Early Years," *Sierra Club Bulletin*, 60 (August/September 1975): 34-37; Holway R. Jones, *John Muir and the Sierra Club: The Battle for Yosemite* (San Francisco, 1965), p. 94.
9. *San Francisco Municipal Reports, 1893-1894* (San Francisco, 1894), Appendix, pp. 153-179; Ad hoc Committee of Engineers (including Manson and eleven others) to Erving M. Scott, Chairman of Committee on Management of Public Works of Board of Supervisors, January 25, 1895, Grunsky Family Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.
10. Phelan was a member of a socially prominent San Francisco family, and the alliance of these people with professional experts again suggests the theme of reformist elitism. See also Haber, *Efficiency and Uplift*, pp. 101-107.
11. This sketch of Manson's personality is pieced together from the Manson Papers.
12. Ray W. Taylor, *Hetch Hetchy: The Story of San Francisco's Struggle to Provide a Water Supply for Her Future Needs* (San Francisco, 1926), pp. 14-25; *San Francisco Municipal Reports, 1871-1872* (San Francisco, 1872), Appendix, pp. 626-640; *San Francisco Municipal Reports, 1874-1875* (San Francisco, 1875), Appendix, pp. 613-723. By 1880, the city was paying 25 percent of its annual income for water, which helps to explain both the bitterness of rate fights and the interest of the city in alternate sources.
13. *San Francisco Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year 1900-1901* (San Francisco, 1901), pp. 409-423.
14. *Twenty-First Annual Report of the United States Geological Survey, Charles D. Walcott, Director, 1899-1900, Part IV, Hydrography* (Washington, 1901), pp. 449-465. For the earlier proposals, see *Hetch Hetchy Dam Site: Hearing before the Committee on the Public Lands, House of Representatives, 63 Cong., 1 Sess., on H.R. 6281* (Washington, 1913), p. 102; *San Francisco Municipal Reports, 1893-1894, App.*, pp. 170-171; *Eleventh Annual Report of the United States Geological Survey to the Secretary of the Interior, 1889-1890, by J. W. Powell, Director, Part II, Irrigation* (Washington, 1891), p. 157; *Twelfth Annual Report of the United States Geological Survey to the Secretary of the Interior, by J.W. Powell, Director, Part II, Irrigation* (Washington, 1892), pp. 31-32, 36-37; *San Francisco Municipal Reports, 1900-1901*, pp. 227-427.
15. *21st Annual Report, Geological Survey*, p. 450; Grunsky's Note-book, 1900 (entries for September 20-October 4) in Grunsky Family Papers.
16. *San Francisco Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year 1902-1903* (San Francisco, 1904), pp. 402-471.
17. The origins of the Right of Way Act of February 15, 1901, are obscure. Although it certainly benefitted San Francisco, no definite evidence suggests the city originated it. It was sponsored by Representative Marion DeVries of Stockton, who maintained it was intended to reconcile conflicts among various existing laws. Legislation of this sort was requested by the secretary of the interior in 1899, before the Hetch Hetchy project was conceived. See *Report of the Secretary of the Interior, Annual Reports of the Department of the Interior, 1899* (Washington, 1899), pp. xii-xiii; *Report No. 1850, "Rights of Way through Certain Parks, etc.," 56 Cong., 1 Sess., U.S. Congress, House, Reports; Miscellaneous* (Washington, 1900). Historians have suspected collusion between DeVries and city officials, but very likely DeVries was more concerned with providing irrigation water for his constituents than drinking water for San Francisco. See John Ise, *Our National Park Policy: A Critical History* (Baltimore, 1961), pp. 68-69, 78, 113-114; Jones, *Muir and the Sierra Club*, pp. 89-90.
18. Taylor, *Hetch Hetchy*, p. 48; *San Francisco Municipal Reports, 1902-1903*, p. 353; Walton Bean, *Boss Ruef's San Francisco: The Story of the Union Labor Party, Big Business, and the Graft Prosecution* (Berkeley, 1952), p. 270.
19. Board of Supervisors, City of San Francisco, *Reports on the Water Supply of San Francisco, California, 1900 to 1908, Inclusive* (San Francisco, 1908), pp. 128-133; Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, pp. 69-70.
20. *Who Was Who in America, I, 1897-1942*, p. 492; C. E. Grunsky, "The Water Supply of San Francisco, Cal.," *Journal of the Association of Engineering Societies*, 41 (1908): 83-85; *San Francisco Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year 1903-1904* (San Francisco, 1905), pp. 384-386; Manson to James D. Phelan, November 10, 1906, Manson Papers; M. Nelson McGeary, *Gifford Pinchot: Forester-Politician* (Princeton, 1960), p. 74.
21. *Reports on the Water Supply . . . 1908*, pp. 112-148 (Moody's letter of October 28, 1905 is quoted on p. 148); Taylor, *Hetch Hetchy*, pp. 68-69.
22. *San Francisco Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year 1904-1905* (San Francisco, 1907), pp. 347, 374; Special Committee on Water Supply (Jennings J. Phillips, James L. Gallagher, Charles Boxton, James F. Kelly, Edward Walsh), "Report on Water Supply from the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Received and Adopted October 8, 1906" [San Francisco, 1906], pp. 9-10; Manson to City Engineer Thomas P. Woodward, February 7, 1906, Manson Papers. An earlier Bay Cities proposal, involving sources in Santa Clara County south of San Francisco Bay, had been investigated and rejected by Grunsky in February of

1904. See *San Francisco Municipal Reports, 1903-1904*, pp. 391-405.
23. *San Francisco Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Years 1905-1906, 1906-1907* (San Francisco, 1908), Appendix, pp. 779-786; Manson to Phelan, April 19, 1906, James D. Phelan Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley; "Report on Water Supply . . . , 1906," pp. 10-16; Taylor, *Hetch Hetchy*, pp. 63-66.
  24. Franklin K. Lane to Phelan, September 27, 1906, Phelan Papers; Commonwealth Club of California, "Water Supply for San Francisco," *Transactions*, 2 (San Francisco, 1907): 340 (on this page are copies of Gifford Pinchot to Manson, May 18, November 15, 1906); Bean, *Boss Ruef's San Francisco*, p. 162.
  25. McGeary, *Pinchot*, pp. 69-85, 95-99.
  26. Manson to Phelan, November 10, 1906, Manson Papers; Commonwealth Club, "Water Supply for San Francisco," pp. 275-340. No one actually filed on Hetch Hetchy, but there was one filing on subsidiary reservoir sites at Cherry Valley and Lake Eleanor which the city subsequently had to purchase. See William Hammond Hall to Phelan, November 7, 1907, Phelan Papers; "Summary of Conclusions arrived at by C. D. Marx and J. D. Galloway, Consulting Engineers to the City Engineer of San Francisco, in the matter of appraising the value of certain claims by parties represented by William Hammond Hall at Lake Eleanor and on Eleanor Creek," July 25, 1909, Manson Papers.
  27. Taylor, *Hetch Hetchy*, pp. 70-71; Phelan to Mayor E. R. Taylor, July 23, 1908, Phelan Papers.
  28. *Reports on the Water Supply . . . , 1908*, pp. 148-210.
  29. Phelan to Charles D. Holcomb (member of the Board of Public Works), November 8, 1907; Grunsky to Phelan, December 17, 1907; Phelan to Grunsky, December 30, 1907; Manson to Phelan, December 14, 1907, all in Phelan Papers; Clippings from *San Francisco Bulletin*, January 16, 1908; *San Francisco Star*, January 11, 1908; *San Francisco Commercial News*, January 10, 1908, all in Manson Papers. Manson's salary was \$7000 a year; he had expected \$8000 and was angry not to get it. See Board of Public Works to Manson, June 24, 1908; Manson to Allan Pollock (Member, Board of Supervisors), May 23, 1908, both in Manson Papers.
  30. Edward R. Taylor to Board of Supervisors, April 24, 1908; Lewis L. Dennett (attorney for Modesto Irrigation District) to Manson, September 25, 1908; Copies of reports from Manson to Board of Public Works dated June 4, 21, July 23, September 4, 1908, all in Manson Papers; Taylor, *Hetch Hetchy*, pp. 76-83.
  31. Muir to William Colby, December 30, 1908, William Colby Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley. See also Colby to Robert Underwood Johnson, August 17, 1908; Gifford Pinchot to Colby, February 11, 1905, both in Robert Underwood Johnson Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley; Muir to Colby, May 23, December 24, December 31, 1908, January 25, 1909, John Muir Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley; Jones, *Muir and the Sierra Club*, pp. 91-97.
  32. On the professions of Sierra Club members, see Jones, *Muir and the Sierra Club*. For the effect of political considerations on Theodore Roosevelt, see Elmo R. Richardson, *The Politics of Conservation: Crusades and Controversies, 1897-1913* (Berkeley, 1962), p. 44.
  33. Jones, *Muir and the Sierra Club*, pp. 95-96. The inability of opponents to make even rough cost estimates on technical issues prevented them from realizing that city engineers were consistently underestimating the cost of the Hetch Hetchy project. Manson estimated in 1909 that the project would cost \$45 million; by 1934, when the first water actually reached the city, its cost was \$100 million. See Taylor, *Hetch Hetchy*, p. 112; *Time*, October 22, 1934, p. 16. Cities on the east side of San Francisco Bay, originally included in the Hetch Hetchy project, became disillusioned with its cost and slow conclusion in the 1920s and developed their own project based on the Mokelumne River. By the late 1920s, this system, built at a much lower cost than Hetch Hetchy, was in operation. See clippings from the *Berkeley Gazette*, April 20, 1923, January 21, 1925, and January 1, 1926, all in Manson Papers.
  34. M. M. O'Shaughnessy, *Hetch Hetchy: Its Origin and History* (San Francisco, 1934), pp. 33-36; Jones, *Muir and the Sierra Club*, pp. 103-104; Marsden Manson, "A Statement of San Francisco's Side of the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir Matter, December 30, 1909" (San Francisco, 1909), p. 5. Manson's pamphlet was addressed to his fellow members of the Sierra Club.
  35. Colby to Johnson, August 17, 1908, Johnson Papers; Muir to Colby, December 30, 1908, Colby Papers. See also Acting Secretary of the Interior Frank Pierce to Manson, September 8, 1908, Manson Papers; Muir to Colby, May 23, December 24, December 31, 1908, Muir Papers.
  36. Manson to W. A. Mason, February 19, 1909; A. H. Giannini and Manson to Board of Supervisors, April 5, 1909, both in Manson Papers; House of Representatives, Committee on the Public Lands, *Hearings: San Francisco and the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir* (Washington, 1909); Senate, Committee on Public Lands, *Hearing: Hetch Hetchy Reservoir Site* (Washington, 1909).
  37. Manson to Board of Supervisors, April 5, 1909; Report of City Engineer to Board of Public Works, November 11, 1909, both in Manson Papers; Phelan to R. D. McElroy, January 25, 1909, Phelan Papers; *San Francisco Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year 1908-1909* (San Francisco, 1910), p. 387; *Ibid.*, Appendix, pp. 1418-1432; Taylor, *Hetch Hetchy*, p. 100.
  38. Muir to Johnson, October 27, 1909, Johnson Papers; Jones, *Muir and the Sierra Club*, pp. 105-109.



39. Manson to James R. Garfield, November 1, 1909, January 24, 1910; Manson to George W. Woodruff, January 4, 1910; Manson to Gifford Pinchot, January 9, 1910, all in Manson Papers. See also the pamphlet, Union Labor Party County Committee, San Francisco Labor Council, San Francisco Building Trades Council, "Water Bonds: A Brief and Candid Statement of Facts," *ibid.*; *San Francisco Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year 1909-1910* (San Francisco, 1911), pp. 547-548.
40. Colby to Johnson, December 8, 1907, Johnson Papers; Jones, *Muir and the Sierra Club*, pp. 96-98, 109-120.
41. *Proceedings before the Secretary of the Interior in re Use of Hetch Hetchy Reservoir Site in the Yosemite National Park by the City of San Francisco* (Washington, 1910), p. 6.
42. Colby to J. H. McFarland, March 3, 1910, Colby Papers; Muir to Colby, March 5, 1910, Muir Papers.
43. Jones, *Muir and the Sierra Club*, pp. 103-104, 124.
44. Manson to G. W. Woodruff, April 6, March 24, April 13, 1910; E. G. Hopson to George Otis Smith, November 23, 1909; Louis C. Hill to George Otis Smith, February 7, 1910; Manson to S. M. Stockslager, March 1, 3, 1910; Manson to James D. Phelan, March 3, 1910; Manson to City Attorney Percy V. Long, March 26, 1910, all in Manson Papers; *Proceedings before the Secretary of the Interior*, pp. 7-9.
45. Manson to James R. Garfield, June 18, 1910, Manson Papers.
46. In *Proceedings before the Secretary of the Interior*, this imbalance is obvious. Preservationist testimony takes up about twenty-four of the thirty pages of testimony before the secretary himself, but only six of the eighteen pages of testimony before the Special Advisory Board.
47. Elmo R. Richardson, "The Struggle for the Valley: California's Hetch Hetchy Controversy, 1905-1913," *California Historical Quarterly*, 37 (September, 1959): 253-254.
48. Muir to Colby, May 31, 1910, Muir Papers. For the puzzled reactions of other preservationists, see *Proceedings before the Secretary of the Interior*, pp. 62-63.
49. *San Francisco Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year 1910-1911* (San Francisco, 1912), p. 893; Manson to James R. Garfield, October 14, 1910; Manson to Rudolph Spreckels, April 19, 1911; J. D. Galloway to Mayor Beverly Hodghead (Berkeley), April 27, 1911; Hodghead to Manson, May 2, 1911; Manson to Hodghead, May 3, 1911, all in Manson Papers.
50. Marsden Manson, "San Francisco's Side of the Hetch Hetchy Matter," *Twentieth Century Magazine*, 44 (1910): 270-274; Manson to Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, July 19, 1910; Gifford Pinchot to Manson, July 26, 1910; Manson to S. M. Stockslager, September 27, 1910, all in Manson Papers.
51. Phelan to Manson, May 24, 1911, Manson Papers. For examples of Manson's correspondence of the period, see Manson to Ralph W. Hershey, December 21, 1911, and two drafts of Manson to W. H. Taft, January 22, 1911, all in *ibid.*
52. Muir to Colby, March 23, 31, May 8, 1911, Muir Papers; Jones, *Muir and the Sierra Club*, pp. 127-128.
53. McFarland to Colby, September 28, 1911, quoted at length in Jones, *Muir and the Sierra Club*, pp. 128-130.
54. Manson to John R. Freeman, January 24, 1912, Manson Papers.
55. Manson to Phelan, December 18, 1912, March 11, 1913; Manson to G. W. Woodruff, August 4, 1912, all in Manson Papers; Taylor, *Hetch Hetchy*, pp. 122-123. O'Shaughnessy, *Hetch Hetchy*, pp. 22-26. It seems probable that Manson suffered a nervous breakdown during this period.
56. Ironically, O'Shaughnessy, not Manson, was remembered in San Francisco as the father of the Hetch Hetchy project. He supervised its construction, and the dam which was the key-stone of the system was named for him. When the first Hetch Hetchy water arrived in San Francisco in October of 1934, O'Shaughnessy, who had recently died, was the hero of the moment, and Manson was forgotten. See *Time*, October 22, 1934, pp. 16-18.
57. John R. Freeman, *A Report on the Proposed Use of the Hetch Hetchy, Eleanor and Cherry Valleys within and Near to the Boundaries of the Stanislaus U.S. National Forest Reserve and the Yosemite National Park as Reservoirs for Impounding Tuolumne River Flood Waters and Appurtenant Works for the Water Supply of San Francisco, California, and Neighboring Cities* (San Francisco July 15, 1912); *Hetch Hetchy Valley: Report of the Advisory Board of Army Engineers to the Secretary of the Interior on Investigations Relative to Sources of Water Supply for the San Francisco and Bay Communities* (Washington, February 19, 1913); Jones, *Muir and the Sierra Club*, pp. 134-168.
58. Samuel P. Hays, "The Politics of Reform in Municipal Government in the Progressive Era," in David M. Kennedy, ed., *Progressivism: The Critical Issues* (Boston, 1971), p. 105.
59. Bates, "Fulfilling American Democracy," p. 38.
60. Gifford Pinchot, *The Fight for Conservation* (Americana Reprint of 1910 edition, Seattle, 1967), p. 43.
61. Paolo E. Coletta, *The Presidency of William Howard Taft* (Lawrence, Kans., 1973), pp. 77-100.
62. See John Opie's introduction to a selection from Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac* in Opie, ed., *Americans and Environment: The Controversy over Ecology* (Lexington, Mass., 1971), p. 45.
63. Muir to Johnson, October 16, 1913, Johnson Papers.
64. Jones, *Muir and the Sierra Club*, pp. 94, 110.
65. The rapidity with which the conservation movement grew and its absorption into progressivism did not encourage the development of a broad philosophical base. On the divergent trends in progressive conservation, see James Penick, Jr., "The Progressives and the Environment: Three Themes from the First Conservation Movement," in Lewis L. Gould, *The Progressive Era* (Syracuse, 1974), pp. 115-131.

# HORATIO NELSON RUST

## abolitionist, archaeologist, indian agent



*Rust, Mrs. Thaddeus Lowe, and photographers C. J. Crandall and A. C. Vroman trekked to Arizona in 1895 to witness the renowned Hopi Snake Dance at Walpi. The team they hired at Holbrook pulled 1500 pounds of camping and photographic baggage. Vroman made this photograph.*

At the turn of the century, Pasadena and its neighboring Arroyo Seco attracted some remarkable settlers—people of talent, enterprise, and occasional flamboyance. Many were writers who became propagandists for California and the Southwest, among them Charles F. Lummis and George Wharton James. A surprising number shared an interest in the culture of the American Indian and became advocates of Indian rights and collectors of tribal artifacts.

One of these early Pasadenans was Horatio Nelson Rust, who was nationally known as an amateur archaeologist and a discerning collector of Native American relics. He considered himself a champion of Indian rights and served a term as federal agent to the Mission and Tule River Indians. With boundless enthusiasm, he also labored as pioneer nurseryman, California booster, and a tireless promoter of the civic good.

Rust wrote no books and left no legacy such as Lummis's Southwest Museum. Today his contributions are largely forgotten, but something of his spirit has been preserved in an essay written by Oliver Wendell Holmes, who met Rust during the Civil War and described him as "a really kind, good man, full of zeal, determined to help somebody."<sup>1</sup>

An eighth-generation New Englander, Rust was born in 1828 in Amherst, Massachusetts. A childhood gift of a prehistoric stone axe inspired his lifelong interest in Indian artifacts, and a visit with his father to the prisoners of the slave ship *Amistad* inalterably convinced him of the horrors of slavery.

Nineteen years old when his father died, Rust abandoned thoughts of further education and went to work, first as a carpenter, then as an edge-tool maker and a machinist. Later he studied medicine with a country

doctor, and for about ten years he was a druggist in Collinsville, Connecticut, where in 1857 he met the radical abolitionist John Brown, who was visiting relatives nearby.

A Free-Soil Republican eager to assist the anti-slavery cause, Rust helped raise money for Brown and rode with him to buy wagons and other supplies for the free-state settlers in Kansas. He also helped secure a contract for the manufacture of a thousand pikes which Brown thought "would make a cheap and efficient weapon with which even a woman could defend her cabin door against man or beast."<sup>2</sup> Brown never used the pikes in Kansas, as he first intended, but stockpiled them instead at a Maryland farm, where they were confiscated after his raid on Harpers Ferry.

Brown's family was grateful to Rust for salvaging the memorial stone which once marked the grave of John Brown's grandfather, a soldier in the Revolution. The same stone now bears the names of the old patriot and of John Brown and three of his sons (one killed in Kansas and two at Harpers Ferry)—"a list of five Browns in one family," Rust commented, "who gave up their lives in helping to secure the liberties of the people."<sup>3</sup>

Over a period of nearly fifty years, Rust helped raise money for the Brown family. To a friend he wrote, "I remember when Capt. Brown was near his execution. He said to our representative who visited him in prison, 'My only anxiety is for my family.' The reply (a proper one) was *we* (meaning those of us who had encouraged and helped him) will take care of the family. I have always felt that the promise rested upon me, and I have not forgotten it."<sup>4</sup> Brown's daughter Ruth acknowledged to Rust, "*You* of all the friends and admirers of John Brown have stood by his children, through all circumstances. You have been *true as truth itself*."<sup>5</sup> Ruth and her brothers Jason and Owen all moved to the Pasadena area, perhaps because of Rust's support.

As a Civil War medical volunteer, Rust traveled by wagon to Antietam in the company of Oliver Wendell

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Jane Apostol is a docent at the Huntington Library. She has written several articles on people associated with the early history of Pasadena.

The author thanks CHS Librarian Gary F. Kurutz, whose talk on Rust inspired the article and whose suggestions helped shape it.



*Oliver Wendell Holmes described  
Horatio Nelson Rust as a respectable  
New Englander with a hay-bearded face.  
Rust was about 78 when this  
photograph was taken.*

Holmes who was searching for his wounded son. In an essay about the journey, Holmes described Rust as “a New Englander of respectable appearance, with grave, hard, honest, hay-bearded face.”<sup>6</sup> Holmes poked mild fun at Rust’s singleminded sense of duty, later admitting that the sketch was perhaps “a little sharp in one or two expressions. . . . But you saw that I felt a real respect for yourself and your errand.”<sup>7</sup>

At the battlefield, Rust dressed wounds, helped with amputations, drove an ambulance, and arranged transport home for the wounded. He served under the auspices of the Christian Commission but wrote impatiently to his wife, “Decayed clergymen are among the greatest nuisance we have here. . . . Our managers are men who know nothing of business and expect to do it by praying and preaching.”<sup>8</sup> In situations where there seemed to be little organization or direction, Rust showed initiative and resourcefulness and “took hold so handy”<sup>9</sup> that he won praise from the chief surgeon. Undoubtedly he deserved the title of Major Rust which he adopted in later years.

In 1875 Rust moved to Chicago with his wife Fidelia and their four children. He operated the city’s largest warehouse and for a time served as secretary of the Chicago Relief Association, which collected money and goods for the freed black emigrants to Kansas. Among other fund-raising activities, he arranged a lecture tour by the Rev. Josiah Henson, who had been Harriet Beecher Stowe’s model for Uncle Tom.<sup>10</sup> The great Quaker reformer Elizabeth Comstock called Rust a man of sound common sense and assured him, “We rely upon thy judgment *entirely* . . . concerning the refugees, & the shipments for their benefit.”<sup>11</sup>

Wherever he lived, Rust pursued his lifelong interest in archaeology. As a traveling salesman in New York and New England, he visited abandoned Indian sites and purchased relics discovered there. After moving to Chicago, he learned about a pottery find in Missouri and hurried to the site. He unearthed numerous stone



implements and some 2000 clay vessels which he reported on at meetings of the Chicago Academy of Science and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Eventually he sold most of the artifacts to Yale and the University of Pennsylvania, but he sent a few pieces to Wendell Phillips to be sold for the benefit of the historic Old South Meeting House.

In 1878 Rust traveled up the Missouri River—an account of Lewis and Clark’s expedition in hand—and brought back ornaments, pipes, and stone hammers used by the Indians. The next year, as historian of the trade delegation to Mexico, he presented some of his Dakota and Missouri finds to Mexico’s National Museum, which had no specimens from the United States. On his return from Mexico with a rich collection of Aztec antiquities, he lectured “before literary and scientific associations, holding the closest attention of his audience for an hour and a quarter, or more.”<sup>12</sup>

In 1881, the fifty-three-year-old Rust made a pre-

liminary visit to California looking for "good soil, pure water, a better climate . . . and a respectable community."<sup>13</sup> Finding all these in Pasadena, he moved his family there the following year, and they settled on Monterey Road (now in South Pasadena), on thirty-five acres of land for which Rust paid \$80 an acre. He and his young son Edward planted seeds from oranges gathered in a nearby grove, and in two years they had 20,000 seedlings ready for budding to the Washington navel orange and the Eureka lemon. This was the beginning of the family's nursery, which continued in business for sixty years.

Soon Rust was sending exuberant dispatches to the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* and other eastern papers for which he became a special correspondent. "The ornamental trees and shrubbery grow in a most reckless manner,"<sup>14</sup> he reported. "Sunstroke is unknown here and lightning is so faint and seldom seen as to be a novelty. . . . We are remarkably exempt from malaria and insects, and may live in the open air all year round."<sup>15</sup> About the wildlife he observed, "We have deer near in the mountains, rabbits everywhere, quail by the thousands, wildcats, and cayotes [sic], a small wolf, are plenty—not dangerous but very musical at night. The panther, or so-called California lion, has been killed in this colony several times, but are very shy."<sup>16</sup>

In 1882 Pasadenans formed an association to build a public library, an effort they proudly announced was "the first movement of its kind in Southern California."<sup>17</sup> As one of the association's directors, Rust solicited the advice of librarians around the country. In answer to one question, Columbia University's Melvil Dewey advised him, "A separate reading room for ladies has often been tried but very little used. It adds to the cost of running the Library without a corresponding gain. Ladies who read seem to object to being shut off in a separate room."<sup>18</sup>

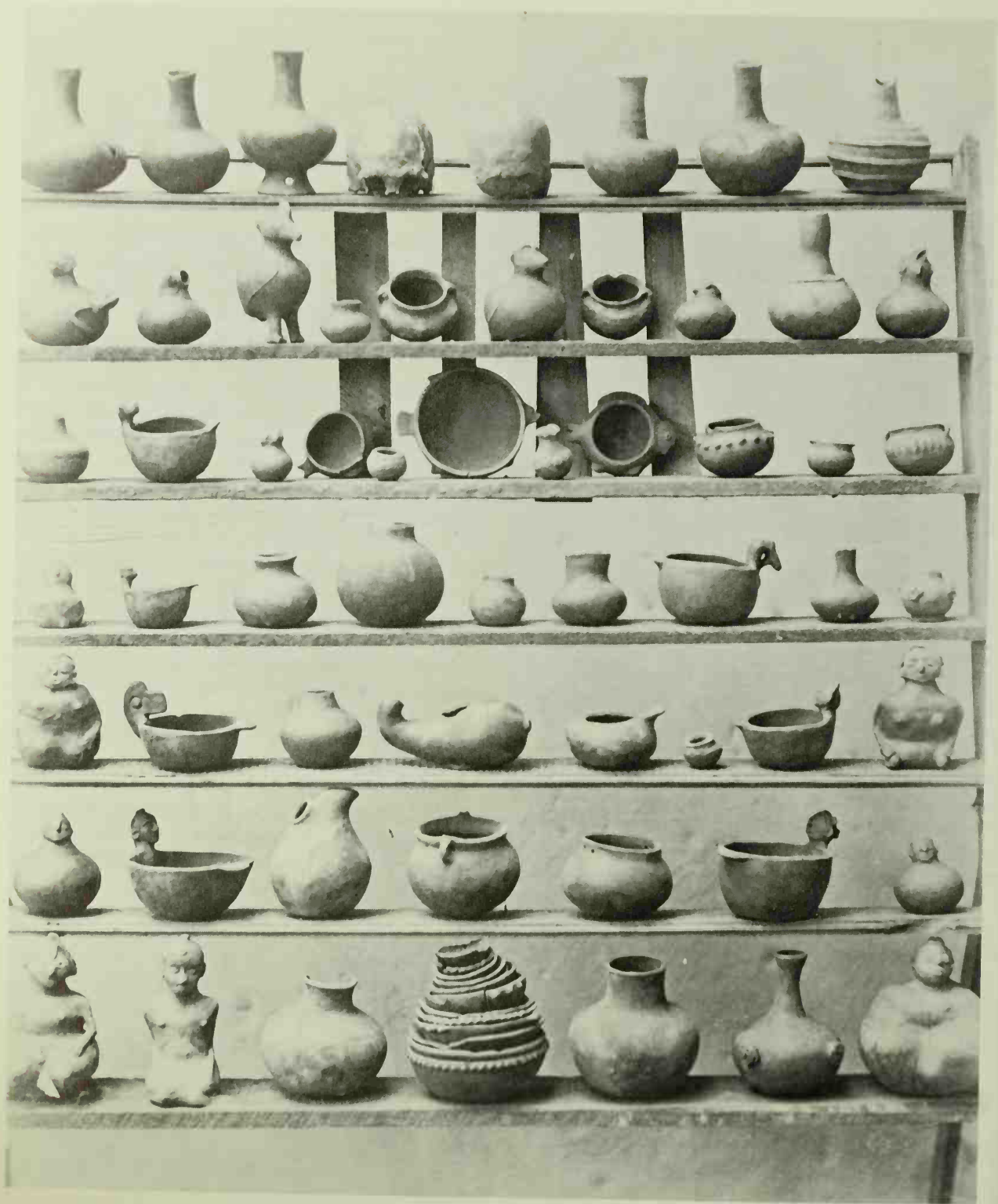
Rust energetically raised funds for the library; in fact, his fellow directors called him the enthusiast of the

board. He gave a slide talk which netted \$21.50, he lent Indian artifacts to an exhibition which brought in \$272.46, and he served on the committee for the library's most successful fund raising project—a citrus fair, held in 1885 in the town's roller-skating rink, which made a profit of \$531. To advertise the event, the committee published a ninety-two page pamphlet which not only promoted the fair but listed all the books in the library and sang the praises of Pasadena as an ideal place for "the sober, industrious, and intelligent."<sup>19</sup>

In 1886 Rust became a driving force behind an ambitious citrus fair held in Chicago. As a Commissioner of Immigration for Southern California, he anticipated that easterners would flock to California after sampling its fruits. About 50,000 people attended the fair and enjoyed such wonders as the first grove of producing orange trees ever seen in Chicago. Many visitors had their first taste of the navel orange, whose name, Rust thought, should be changed to California Seedless. "It is not always pleasant," he remarked, "to call attention in polite society to a name which would be used with perfect propriety in the medical schools."<sup>20</sup>

Making a career of boosting Southern California, Rust became superintendent of a Southern California fruit exhibit held in St. Louis in 1887 at the same time as a Grand Army of the Republic encampment. He had fruit delivered to distinguished visitors like General William Tecumseh Sherman and made certain that the newspapers reported both the gift and the recipient's appreciative response. Rust also arranged for a carload of grapes to be shipped to St. Louis for free distribution to the veterans. As one newspaper pointed out:

Everyone of the veterans who has a cluster of these grapes, or tastes of the other luscious fruit, will have a definite appreciation of what the charming climate of California can produce, such as no reading or advertisement of any kind could convey. The whole plan is unique, and will, under the management of Major Rust and his colleagues, add perceptibly to the boom that Southern California is already enjoying.<sup>21</sup>





*An amateur archaeologist, Rust dug up more than 200 clay vessels and many hundreds of skulls from mounds and graves in Missouri in 1876 and 1877.*

Not one to waste a promotional opportunity, Rust was on hand to greet the Grand Army veterans when they met in California. He and his committee traveled 142 miles to the railroad station at Barstow where they set up tables and welcomed the passengers with fruits, wine, and lemonade. This hospitality, he said, not only honored Union soldiers but gave them "a truthful knowledge of the advantages which our country offers them and their friends for settlement."<sup>22</sup> Rust was quick to point out, too, that the Golden State had a place for everyone:

Do not believe that land is so high you cannot afford to come and make a home or a living; there are millions of acres in this great State where no boom has yet disturbed its quiet. Cheap lands can be found by the pioneer where the rich retiring merchant will not go, and where honest toil will be amply repaid; where nature will smile upon you, and at worst only blow a little dust in your face.<sup>23</sup>

Rust's interests and energy engaged him in more than simple boosterism. His abilities greatly impressed Abbot Kinney, a fellow board member of the Pasadena Free Library and Village Improvement Association. In 1883, Kinney and Helen Hunt Jackson served as special United States Commissioners to investigate the plight of California's Mission Indians. Kinney decided that Rust would be "the best possible man"<sup>24</sup> for duty as a government Indian agent, and he and Helen Hunt Jackson lobbied for Rust's appointment. In 1889, Rust was formally named agent for the Indians of the Mission-Tule River Consolidated Agency. His jurisdiction extended from the Hoopa Valley in Northern California to the Mexican border and included twenty-two reservations, most of them near the agency headquarters at Colton in San Bernardino County.

At the time Rust was appointed agent, he was secretary of the Los Angeles branch of the Indian Rights Association. Reformers knew him as a champion of

Rogério Rocha, one of the last of the San Fernando Mission Indians, whose fate became a cause célèbre when white landowners forcibly evicted him from his lifelong home. (After Rogério's death in 1904, Rust wrote an article for *Out West* which reopened the controversy about Rogério's treatment.) One newspaper said of Rust's appointment, "His sympathies are with the Indians, and he proposes to see that they obtain complete justice and fair treatment."<sup>25</sup>

Rust served four embattled years as agent. Confronting him were knotty problems of conflicting land claims, of squatters on Indian lands, and of hostile farmers and developers who wanted the reservations opened to homesteading. Antagonism arose from Indians who challenged assimilationist government policies that would force them to give up their language and traditions. Other sensitive issues included church-run schools for Indian children and whether the schools should receive government aid.

"As Agent," Rust commented in one of his reports, "I am trying to do that which is best for the Indian, for he is here to stay and to be a citizen."<sup>26</sup> Accordingly, he urged the government to fence reservation lands against white intruders, to settle land titles, and to provide irrigation water. He also requested money for farm equipment and for seed, recommended building a hospital and a jail, and proposed a bounty on whiskey sellers. In addition, he repaired and rebuilt schools and put them under the care of competent teachers.

Comparing his views on education for Indians to those of Booker T. Washington for the Negro, Rust urged immediate emphasis on practical training, with "the higher, the esthetic education,"<sup>27</sup> reserved for future generations. He also pressed the government to build a manual training school away from the reservation "near some thrifty settlement, where the pupils would come in constant contact with civilization rather than their home influences"<sup>28</sup> and where they might find employment.

*Taken prisoner with Geronimo in 1886, these young Chiricahua Apaches were sent to the Indian school at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Four months later, they were photographed again. Rust believed this picture would help counteract anti-Indian prejudice.*

Campaigning for this kind of school, he exhibited photographs of eleven Chiricahua Apache children who had been taken prisoner with Geronimo and released to the Indian Industrial School at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. According to the *Los Angeles Herald*, photographs taken soon after the capture of the children showed them with

matted hair, lowering looks and attitude of sullen indifference. . . . The companion photographs taken after the Indians had been at Carlisle four months, and had profited by the philanthropic attention of their teachers, show a magical change. . . . There can be no question whatever but that the true policy to be pursued towards the remnants of the Indian tribes of the Pacific coast should be one of kindness and development.<sup>29</sup>

Striving to interest various towns in deeding land for a school, Rust argued that a supply of Indian labor "would be a valuable consideration for local employers."<sup>30</sup> In response to his campaign, the citizens of Perris gave the government eighty acres, and a manual training school was built there in 1893. Unfortunately, the school never fulfilled Rust's expectations. He complained that the government ignored his recommendations for superintendent and that the first man to hold the position "disgraced the school, robbed the government of several thousand dollars, and ran away."<sup>31</sup> A later superintendent declared that the school was inadequate and the site inappropriate, and he lobbied for its removal to Riverside. Although then retired as agent, Rust fought to convince publishers, politicians, and the general public that the school should remain in Perris. In 1902, however, it closed and later reopened in Riverside as the Sherman Institute.

Government day schools on the reservation competed with two Catholic mission schools—one in San Diego and one in Banning—which received a government allotment for each Indian student. Rust accused the school at Banning of aggressively recruiting on the reservation and won a promise that it would not seek out or enroll students living within three miles of any gov-



ernment day school. Some Catholics charged Rust with despoiling Indians of their faith and tried to have him removed as agent. William Pablo, an influential Cahuilla and a Catholic, infuriated Rust by encouraging Indians to keep their children out of the government schools. Pablo succeeded for a time in forcing the day school at Potrero (near Banning) to close down for lack of students.

During his tenure as agent, Rust clashed repeatedly with Pablo and his kinsman Chief Cabezon, who actively opposed government efforts to break up the traditional tribal structure. Because the agent considered the two men troublemakers, he urged that they be jailed "until they would quietly submit to proper authority and stop their aspirations to be chiefs."<sup>32</sup> Rust complained of Cabezon's "pernicious and meddlesome influence"<sup>33</sup> and accused Pablo of "constantly fomenting trouble, inciting lawsuits, and hindering those who desire to work."<sup>34</sup>

The Cabezons were hereditary leaders of the Cahuillas, and Rust created an uproar when he encouraged dissident Indians to hold an election in hopes of unseating Cabezon. The dissidents' candidate won, and Rust commissioned him as chief.

Rust responded differently, however, when Indians at Potrero elected William Pablo as their captain. "As long as you elect a good man and obey him and me, you can have a captain," he warned the Indians, "but when you elect a bad man you will not have any captain."<sup>35</sup> Ignoring Pablo, he selected the leader of a rival faction for the position. The man he chose was his personal interpreter, John Morongo, whom he considered "by far the most intelligent, careful, and reasonable man in Potrero."<sup>36</sup>

By this appointment, made with the sanction of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Rust challenged the Indians' right to elect their own leaders.<sup>37</sup> Pablo fought back. He enlisted the support of a San Bernardino attorney (ironically, his name was John Brown) and

circulated a petition asking for Rust's removal. When the Bureau of Indian Affairs merely responded that the agent had good intentions, Pablo gave the newspapers a list of grievances: that Rust was tyrannical and arbitrary, had "the visionary theories and self-conceit of a crank,"<sup>38</sup> and was less interested in his duties as agent than in obtaining artifacts from the Indians and selling them for personal gain.

Pablo also organized the Indians to get Cabezon re-elected. In March, 1892, the *San Francisco Chronicle* discussed the upcoming election in an article that lampooned Rust and lauded Pablo as "a remarkably able Indian . . . who has shown great political ability in this fight."<sup>39</sup> Accusing Rust of stirring up factional discord among the Cahuillas, the *Chronicle* also charged him with using his official visits to the reservations as "predatory relic-hunting tours."<sup>40</sup> The charges were repeated in newspapers across the country, and the *Los Angeles Times* suggested that Rust's job as agent allowed him "to kill two birds with one stone pestle, so to speak."<sup>41</sup>

Immediately, Rust's friends sprang to his defense. An outraged Jessie Benton Frémont wrote Anna Dawes, whose father was chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, that Rust was "of the best New England high motive and courage. . . . Not the kind of people the usual Indian agent comes from; and therefore very displeasing and disturbing to the interests of the usual kind there." In conclusion, she expressed a hope that Dawes would "protect such an unusual man who combines true care of the Indians with researches that make America honored among scientific bodies here and in Europe."<sup>42</sup>

In May, 1892, Rust came under fire again in a letter to the editor of the *St. Louis Republic*, which had carried an article on the Cahuillas. A St. Louis man, who once tried to have Rust dismissed from his position for bigotry, sent copies of the letter to Senator George G. Vest of Missouri and John W. Noble, Secretary of the Interior. When the Senate requested information on the



*In 1903 Rust brought a group of Navajos to Pasadena for the Rose Parade. Later he took them to San Pedro, where they made an offering of sacred meal to the Pacific Ocean.*

discontent among the Cahuillas, Noble authorized an investigation.

The subsequent inquiry found that although Rust was a person of ability, he lacked the qualifications to be a successful agent. His manner was described as "most unfortunate, calculated unintentionally to make enemies;"<sup>43</sup> but Rust himself, the report concluded, was "honest, of good moral character and honest in his convictions . . . a man who intends to do right."<sup>44</sup> Rust was forced to resign in 1893, but he continued to speak out in behalf of schools, jobs, and land allotments for the Indians.

In 1892, while embroiled with Cabezon and Pablo, Rust had tried to get a job collecting for the museum at Stanford University. Scholars from Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania who wrote letters on his behalf described Rust as "exact and painstaking . . . an expert in his line of research"<sup>45</sup> and "an enthusiastic and able collector of archaeological and ethnological materials."<sup>46</sup>

When nothing came of these efforts, Rust turned his attention to the World's Columbian Exposition scheduled for Chicago in 1893. Although O. T. Mason of the Smithsonian Institution thought Rust "the best man on the West Coast"<sup>47</sup> to prepare an ethnological exhibit under the auspices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Rust was not given the assignment. He did attend the fair, however, and he gloried in it. He arranged an exhibit of Lincoln and John Brown memorabilia, served as judge for ethnological exhibits, and won an award for his own collection of artifacts which Frank G. Logan, a Chicago businessman, had recently bought to present to Beloit College in Wisconsin. According to news reports, the Rust Collection was "the finest of its kind in existence and worth fully \$15,000."<sup>48</sup> It remains an important part of the school's Logan Museum of Anthropology.

In 1895, Rust collected more artifacts on a trip through the Southwest to see the Grand Canyon, the

Petrified Forest, and the Snake Dance of the Hopi Indians. Traveling with him were three fellow Pasadenans—Mrs. Thaddeus S. C. Lowe, who possessed a magnificent collection of Indian baskets; A. C. Vroman, who made his first photographs of the Southwest on this trip; and the photographer J. C. Crandall, described by Vroman as "the man to whom I go for advice, when in trouble."<sup>49</sup> The travelers went by train, by lumber wagon, and—in Mrs. Lowe's case—by twelve-foot ladder. Too heavy to climb to the mesa where the dance was performed, she sat regally on the ladder as seven Indians carried her up the trail.

A careful observer, Rust wrote a detailed news report of the trip with descriptions of the dance, the landscape, and Navajo and Hopi customs. "We feel sure," he summarized, "that the student or tourist cannot find a more wild, unknown, and interesting country on the continent than Arizona."<sup>50</sup> Rust also wrote an article, "The Moqui Snake Dance," which appeared in *The Land of Sunshine* in January, 1896, and was illustrated by Vroman's stunning photographs.

Over the next few years, Rust busied himself with the archaeology of his own locale. He studied the sites of seven prehistoric villages in the Pasadena area and observed that they were all in areas still considered desirable, thus showing, he wrote, "that pre-historic man was a good judge of residence property."<sup>51</sup> Rust made numerous finds on San Nicolas Island and made two collecting trips for the Smithsonian. Its department of ethnology was delighted with the objects he obtained from the Mission Indians and specially noted them in its annual reports for 1900 and 1901.

A year after his wife Fidelia died in 1899, Rust married Hattie S. Elliott. Although now in his seventies, Rust apparently was considering a career as lecturer because R. J. Bennett wrote him: "Your best subjects, as I look at it, will be 'Indian' and 'Archaeology.' 'The Cañon' and 'Snake Dance' are sewed up in expensive style. . . . Now for a secret, but don't tell it—Punch and Judy will



draw a larger crowd than all you have found of prehistoric times.”<sup>52</sup>

One of the most extraordinary of Rust’s later enterprises was bringing thirty Navajos from Canyon Diablo in Arizona to Pasadena to take part in the 1903 Rose Parade. After visiting hogans for thirty miles along the Little Colorado River, he invited the Indians to a Christmas feast at the railroad depot. In his own words: “It consisted of Mutton, Flour, Coffee & Sugar and Baking Powder. These articles we issued to them each morning as they wanted it and they cooked it as they wished. Everything being free and they having no dispeptics and good appetites, all enjoyed it.”<sup>53</sup>

Three days later, an interpreter introduced Rust as a big chief from California who might be persuaded to take the Indians back with him for a visit. According to Rust, “In due time I consented to take such as had good Blankets saddles & such articles as I wanted. Thus they were led to display what they had & finally we had them all stand in line with their goods and we selected 27,

rejecting such as had nothing.”<sup>54</sup> The number grew to thirty when three more men sneaked aboard the railroad car.

In Pasadena the Indians camped out in Tournament Park, where they could be visited before the polo game. During the parade, the women rode on floats decorated with blankets and other Indian goods. They sat carding and spinning wool and weaving blankets, while the men rode alongside on Indian ponies hired for the occasion.

For the Indians, the highlight of their Southern California trip was a visit to San Pedro where they saw the ocean for the first time. As their chief scattered sacred meal on the waves and prayed for rain, two others came forward and chanted until the water was almost at their knees. Everyone then scattered offerings and collected sand to take home. Rust provided a demijohn for the medicine men to fill with sea water, and he sent out for empty beer bottles so the others could take back sea water, too.



Rust posed by the Gold of Ophir rosebush he planted from a cutting in 1884. Over 15 feet tall and 25 feet in diameter, the bush reportedly produced 16,563 full-blown roses in 1902.

Before returning to Arizona, the Indians visited Vroman and Charles Lummis and accompanied Rust to church. "Wherever they went," Rust observed, "they were perfectly decorous in all things and really conducted themselves more properly than the same number of American tourists would."<sup>55</sup> The experience, he was sure, was educational for Indians and Pasadenans alike "and must have an influence for good."<sup>56</sup>

Although Rust urged education and employment for the Indians and exposure to the white man's ways, he increasingly focused on the idea of garden schools which would fit the Indians "for useful employment among the country people."<sup>57</sup> He even went so far as to declare that "larger schools teaching them music and baseball tend to destroy love of home life and their own simple ways and unfit them for anything they can do which will give them a living."<sup>58</sup> The Commissioner of Indian Affairs apparently concurred in these views, for he congratulated Rust on his common sense and knowledge of Indian nature.

In 1905 the American Anthropological Association met in California for the first time. With characteristic energy, Rust took it upon himself to publicize the meeting, and he won praise from A. L. Kroeber as a first-rate press agent. The *American Anthropologist* pub-

lished two talks Rust gave at the meeting, and the October-November, 1906, issue carried his last scientific notes. They concerned stone artifacts, a topic he had studied since boyhood. The same issue of the journal reported that Rust died on November 14, 1906, at the age of seventy-eight.

Horatio Nelson Rust was a man of wide interests, lively enthusiasms, and sturdy convictions. He tirelessly promoted Southern California and worked for the civic betterment of Pasadena, which he considered "the best *new* settlement upon the continent."<sup>59</sup> Although untrained as a scholar, he assembled a number of important archaeological collections which helped later generations understand and appreciate Native American culture. Often insensitive and at times limited in his views, he nevertheless did what he thought best to win freedom for the slaves, to improve the freedmen's lot, and to secure justice for the Indians. As Oliver Wendell Holmes told Rust, "Doing good service to humanity . . . is your instinct and your calling."<sup>60</sup>

The photograph of the rosebush is courtesy the South Pasadena Public Library. All the other illustrations are from the Huntington Library, San Marino.



## Notes

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# “no longer a buoyant ship”

UNEARTHING THE  
GOLD RUSH STORESHIP  
*NIANTIC*

Transforming the sleepy settlement of Yerba Buena into the bustling city of San Francisco, the California gold rush brought thousands of eager gold seekers to the continent's western shore in ships of all sizes, makes, and registries. Many of the vessels were destined never to leave San Francisco, for more often than not their captains would wake the morning after entering the harbor to find themselves in command of ships without crews. By early 1850, over seven hundred ships lay abandoned and derelict in the waters of Yerba Buena Cove, their men lost to the lure of the gold fields.

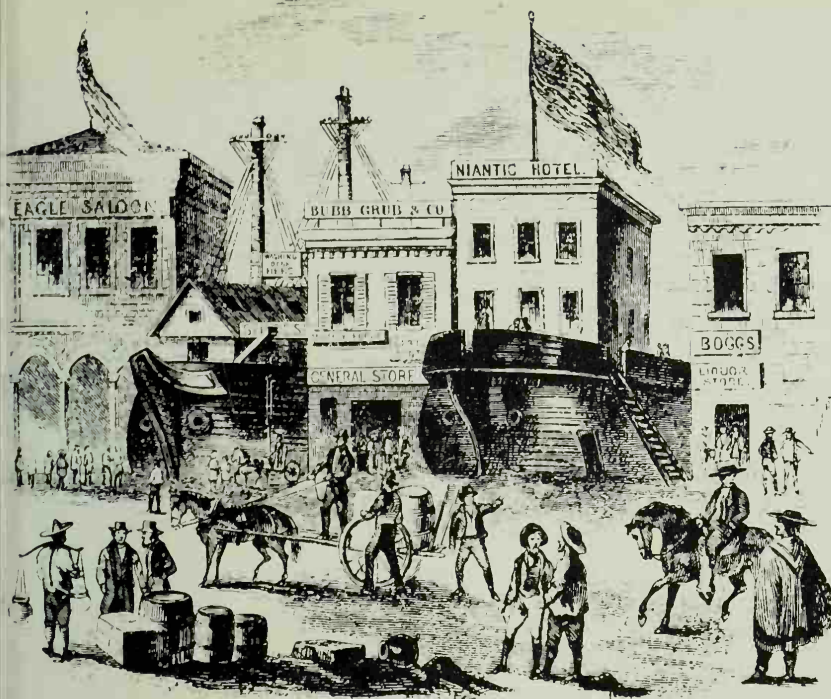
As time passed, most of the ships were remanned or allowed to sink, but a few met an entirely different fate. Hauled near shore to be used as buildings in lumber-starved San Francisco, they served as warehouses, churches, offices, hotels, and even a prison.

As the rapidly expanding city filled in its encircling marshes and coves, these old ships were buried where they had been anchored. Today, Yerba Buena Cove is in the heart of downtown San Francisco's financial district. Recalling the former cove and its odd assortment of forgotten vessels, some oldtimers claim that if you press your ear to the ground you can still hear the creaking of the buried ship's timbers. As if to add credibility to these tales, construction activities have occasionally unearthed the rotted and worn timbers of forgotten gold rush ships, as unidentifiable as flotsam on the beach but intriguing and mysterious.

Great was the excitement, then, when in April, 1978, excavation for a new building on Clay and Sansome streets in the city's financial district uncovered the reasonably intact remains of the old whaler *Niantic*. Unlike her fragmentary neighbors, the *Niantic* had a story to tell. Buried under twenty-four feet of mud and

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Employed by the National Park Service as an historian, James P. Delgado specializes in California history prior to 1850. He was a member of a National Park Service team assigned to evaluate the *Niantic*'s historical significance.



HIGH AND DRY.

*Frank Marryat's fanciful drawing of the storeship Niantic hints at San Francisco's bustling make-do atmosphere in the early fifties. Beached two doors away, the Apollo doubled as a saloon until everything on the former mud flats were leveled by the fire of May 3, 1851.*

fill, the *Niantic* lay where she had been beached some 130 years earlier. Even more fascinating was the discovery of many of the goods that had been stored in her hull. Fire had swept away her topsides and buried the rest of her, and modern San Franciscans were afforded a new and rare glimpse of the instant city built on foundations of gold.

News of the discovery of the *Niantic* flashed across the United States, and in San Francisco, details of the story filled the newspapers. Hundreds of people visited the site in hopes of a glimpse of the long-lost whaler, and gradually, her story emerged.

A full-rigged, three-masted sailing vessel, the *Niantic* was constructed of sturdy oak and pine in Chatham, Connecticut. Registered on October 29, 1835, at 451 tons and 119 feet long, she was extremely broad for her short length.<sup>1</sup> As a commercial vessel built for the China trade, she was a slow, "bluff-bowed" type of ship, with a massive, two-foot-thick keel held together by solid copper bars wider than a man's thumb. Her planking was attached to the ribs with huge wooden pegs, and iron spikes and brass nails held sheets of copper tight to her hull to protect against damage by marine worms. Built for one of the top shipping firms of the day,

N. L. & G. Griswold of New York, she was spared no expense in her construction.

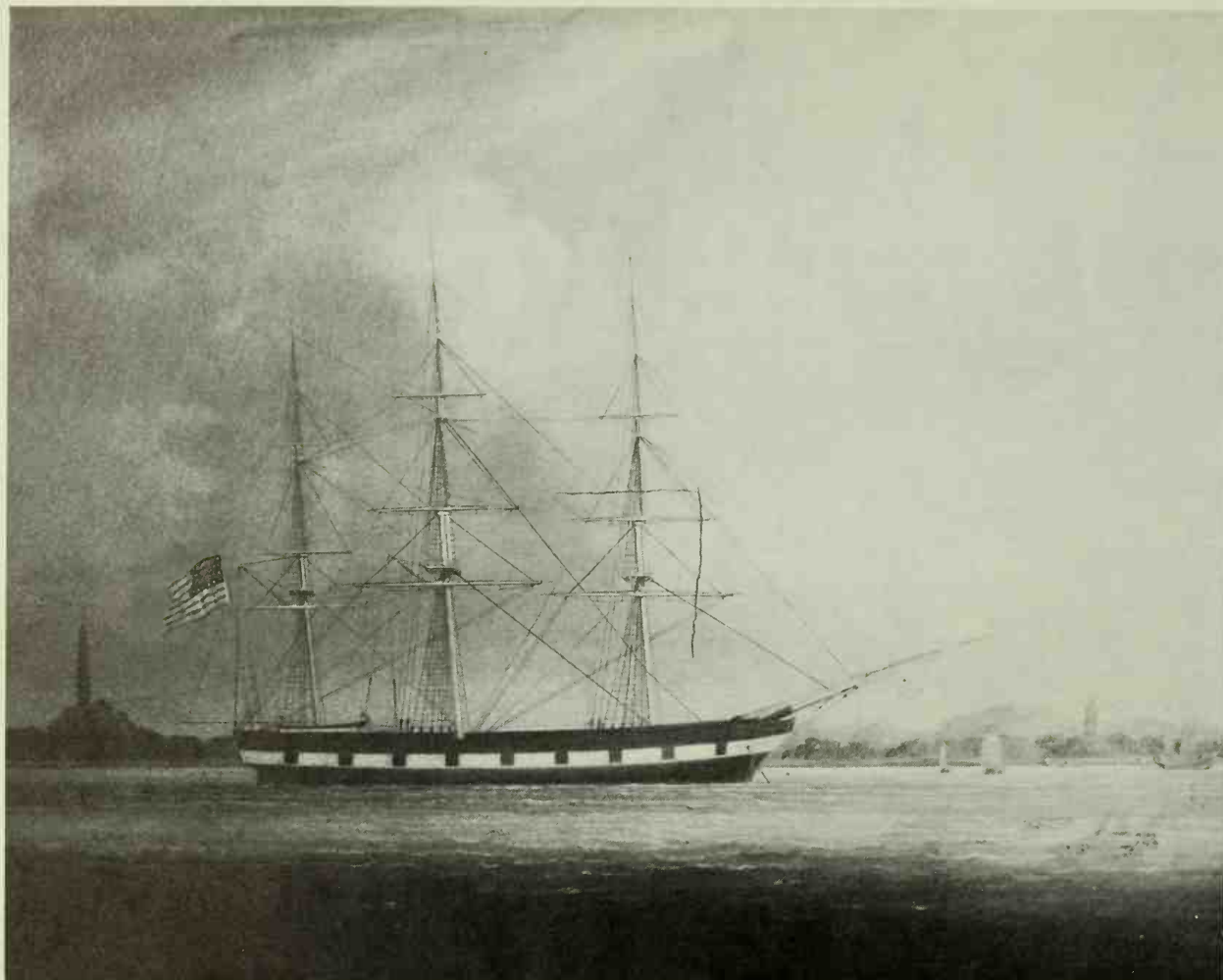
Working in the China trade, the *Niantic* was reported by her chief historian, F. C. Matthews, to be loaded with tea and silk in the Port of Canton just before it was blockaded in 1840 during the Opium War. Then, according to Matthews,

Captain [Levi F.] Doty, who was in command, was very ill when the ship was about to sail. With him, however, was Captain Robert Bennett Forbes of Boston. Captain Forbes was a partner in the firm of Russell and Company, an American firm located in Whampoa; and as he was very anxious to get home on business, he navigated the entire passage with Captain Doty making the trip laying in the cot swinging over the table in the small cabin. The trip was tedious and hard, the ship being forty-four days from Macao to Anjer, and the whole run being something over one hundred and fifty days.<sup>2</sup>

On that voyage Captain Forbes described the *Niantic* as being "rather shaky, not a fast sailer, quite crank, not over well found. . . ."<sup>3</sup>

Nothing is known of the *Niantic* after the ship's arrival in New York in December 1840, until 1844, when she was sold to a Mr. C. T. Deering for use as a whaling ship. On June 4, 1844, under the command of





a Captain Slate, the *Niantic* embarked on her first whaling voyage while enroute to her new port of Sag Harbor, Maine. She was apparently out to sea until February 1, 1847, when she arrived in Sag Harbor with 120 barrels of sperm oil, 2400 barrels of whale oil, and 10,000 pounds of bone.<sup>4</sup> The *Niantic* was then sold again, this time to the firm of Burr and Smith of Warren, Rhode Island. Ironically, the *Niantic* had been named for a tribe of Indians in Rhode Island.<sup>5</sup>

The *Niantic* was next placed under the command of Captain Henry Cleaveland of West Tisbury, Massachusetts. An experienced seaman, Cleaveland was a taciturn salt who had raised three sea-going sons. All four Cleavelands were aboard the *Niantic* when she set sail for the Northwest Pacific whaling grounds on September 16, 1846.<sup>6</sup> The eldest son, James, was first mate,

with brothers Sylvanus and Daniel as second and third mates.

Journeying around Cape Horn, the *Niantic* beat her way to Payte, Peru, where she put in for provisions. Awaiting Captain Cleaveland was news of the California gold discovery. A letter from the American consul in Panama informed him that thousands of gold seekers were stranded in Panama awaiting a California-bound ship.

Cleaveland immediately landed his whaling gear and began making provisions for carrying passengers. He purchased some 2000 feet of lumber for building berths below decks and took on foodstuffs and blankets, as well as 150 mules requested by the British consul in Panama. Finally setting sail, the *Niantic* arrived in Panama on April 7, 1849.<sup>7</sup>



Not surprisingly, chaos and pandemonium ruled in Panama City. Thousands of men had paid for passage to Panama, then hiked over the dangerous, swampy isthmus to await a ship bound for San Francisco. Being one of the first ships to arrive, the *Niantic* was warmly received. Turning down offers of exorbitant rates, Cleaveland accepted 249 passengers at \$150 for steerage and \$250 for a cabin on a first-come, first-served basis. When his ship was full, he made preparations to sail, but not before he shrewdly sold his excess provisions at a profit to the masters of ships just entering the harbor.<sup>8</sup> On May 2, 1849, the *Niantic* sailed north from Panama for California.<sup>9</sup>

The *Niantic*'s passengers were eager and impatient fortune-seekers. Some would strike it rich, others would die poor, many would sink into obscurity, and a few

A full-rigged, three-masted sailing vessel, the *Niantic* was built as a commercial ship for the China trade. The oil painting (c.1840) shows her anchored in a Chinese port, and the title page of the log from her 1848-49 voyage to California shows her receiving eager passengers at Panama. First Mate James Cleaveland may have sketched the scene.

would become prominent Californians. Aboard were a future judge and a future farmer, a future merchant and a future craftsman, as well as four slaves and their masters and a minister intent on bringing the gospel into the mines.<sup>10</sup>

After a voyage of some sixty-six days, the *Niantic* entered San Francisco Bay on July 5, 1849, with her 248 passengers (one man died during the passage). While the gold seekers soon dispersed into California's mining region, the *Niantic* remained in San Francisco. She had another role to play in the town's history.

As soon as the *Niantic* anchored off Clark's Point (near Telegraph Hill) in Yerba Buena Cove, small boats ferried the passengers to the mainland for the inflated price of \$20 per person. On shore, the excitement and enthusiasm of the gold seekers was so contagious that within one week, the *Niantic*, like hundreds of other vessels in Yerba Buena Cove, had been abandoned by her crew.

Lying deserted and at anchor, the *Niantic* became an insurance risk for her owners. Instead of scuttling her, owners Burr and Smith offered the *Niantic* for sale in the summer of 1849. Their advertisement in the August 9, 1849, *Alta California* read in part:

#### SHIP NIANTIC AND OUTFIT FOR SALE.—

The subscribers offer for sale, the ship "Niantic," 452 tons register, with a full inventory; she is a fast sailer, and ready for any voyage; she will be sold a bargain if applied for immediately, together with a large quantity of merchandise suitable for this market. The ship and outfit can be bought separately.

COOKE, BAKER & CO.  
Sacramento St.

Because San Francisco was growing so quickly and because frequent fires repeatedly levelled the town, lumber and other building supplies were in great demand. One way to meet the demand for shelters was to beach or permanently moor a ship for use as a building, and it was for this purpose that Adolphe Mailliard and

Sam Ward, San Francisco real estate speculators, purchased the *Niantic*.

Waiting until high tide, Mailliard and Ward drove the *Niantic* toward shore and beached her at the end of Clay Street, which extended to the water. According to one account, Mailliard accomplished this task by the following ingenious method:

Short cables were passed under her keel and attached at each end to huge casks that had been partially filled with water and placed along her sides. Then the water was siphoned from the casks. Thus lightened and acting as buoys, they raised the hull several feet, and her owners were able to float her well up on the beach. The casks were then removed. . . .<sup>11</sup>

Once beached, the *Niantic*'s masts were taken out, her rigging and some of her ballast were removed, and piles were driven into each side to keep her erect. In her new career she would be a storehouse, if not quite a storeship.<sup>12</sup>

On September 9, 1849, the *Alta California* announced that the *Niantic* was ready to accept articles for storage. Interested parties were to "apply on board to Ward, Mersch and Company." By one account, the *Niantic*'s hull had been pierced with two doors, one on Clay Street, "above which her enterprising owner had painted the ingratiating sign: 'Rest For The Weary and Storage for Trunks.'" <sup>13</sup>

Some months later another advertisement for the *Niantic*'s services appeared in the *Alta*. According to the notice of February 2, 1850:

The owners of the ship *Niantic* announce to the public of San Francisco, that said vessel is now ready to receive storage upon the most favorable terms. From the facilities offered of receiving and delivering goods, both afloat and on shore, with security against rain and fire, they confidently recommend these warehouses to the attention of the mercantile community. Terms of storage—\$1 per month per barrel of 196 lbs., or thereabouts; \$10 per month per ton of 40 cubic feet. Goods are received or delivered from 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. Two large lighters of about 50 tons, to let. Apply on board to Whitehead, Ward, & Co.

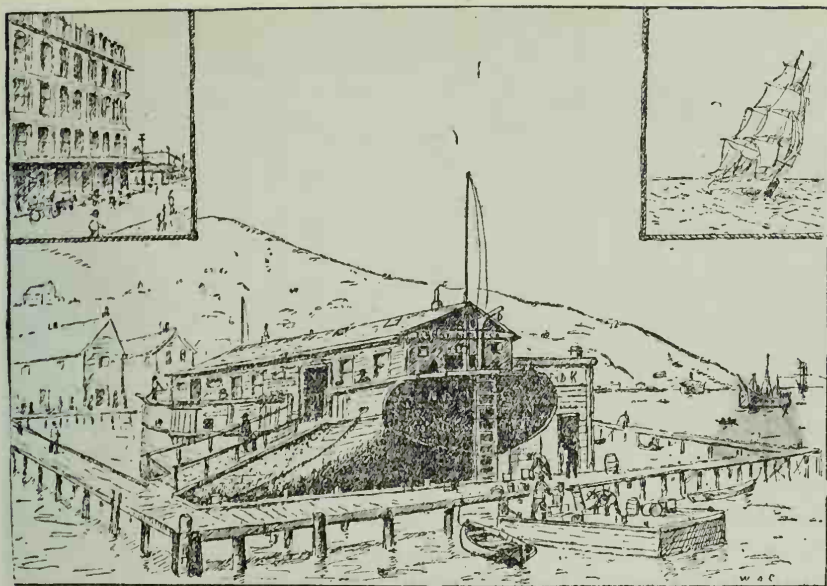
The "lighters" mentioned in the advertisement were small craft used to load and unload freight from the *Niantic* which was still surrounded on three sides by water. To improve the access by lighters to his ship, Mailliard in fact purchased all of the water lots between the *Niantic* and Montgomery Street to the east. When he informed his new tenants of his purchase, however, they questioned that "those Yankees" would leave the lots "that way." The rapid filling-in of the water lots proved them right.<sup>14</sup>

Soon the *Niantic* became San Francisco's best-known storeship, and many travelers and residents made mention of her. Perhaps even Captain Cleaveland, who stayed with his sons in San Francisco to take advantage of the booming market, may have stored his wares in his old command.<sup>15</sup>

Contemporary accounts of the *Niantic* give a complete description of this important San Francisco storeship. One narrative by William Kelley, who visited the *Niantic* in March of 1850, described her new-found use:

On inquiring where my friend, Mr. S., was located, I was told that I could be landed at a stair-foot leading right to it; and was not a little surprised when we pulled alongside a huge dismantled hulk, surrounded by a strong and spacious stage, connected with the street by a substantial wharf, to find the counting house on the deck of the *Niantic*, a fine vessel of a thousand tons, no longer a buoyant ship, surmounted by lofty spars and streamers waving in the wind, but a tenement anchored in the mud, covered with a shingle roof, subdivided into stores and offices and painted over with signs and showboards of the various occupants. To this base use was my friend obliged to convert her rather than let her rot at anchor, there being no possibility of getting a crew to send her to sea. Her hull was divided into warehouses, entered by spacious doorways on the sides, and her bulwarks were raised about eight feet, affording a





THE NIAHTIO - WHALESHIP, STOREHOUSE, BUSINESS BLOCK.

[Sketched for the "Call" by W. A. Coulter.]

More accurate than Marryat's rendering, this sketch of the storeship *Niantic* shows her busy rear access by water.

range of excellent offices on the deck, at the level of which a wide balcony was carried around, surmounted by a veranda, approached by a broad, handsome stairway. Both stores and offices found tenants at higher rates than tenements of similar dimensions on shore would, and returned a larger and steadier income, as my friend told me, than the ship would have earned if afloat.<sup>16</sup>

Another San Francisco resident and former *Niantic* passenger observed that "moored for storage, [the ship] earned her owners \$20,000 per month for a long, long, time."<sup>17</sup>

Called by the San Francisco Maritime Museum "the most famous vessel of gold rush San Francisco," the *Niantic*—both at sea and on land and in words and in pictures—is probably "the most documented storeship" in San Francisco.<sup>18</sup> One of the most delightful contemporary drawings of her use as a storeship was rendered for the book *Mountains and Molehills* by author and artist Frank Marryat. Drawn with great artistic license, the picture was later rendered into a lithograph. At the time Marryat made his drawing, Yerba Buena Cove was already partially filled, and the *Niantic* rested about three blocks from the sea. Titling his drawing "High and Dry," the amused Marryat explained:

The front of the city is extending rapidly into the sea, as water-lots are filled up with sand hills which the steam excavators remove. This has left many of the old ships,

which were a year ago beached as store-houses, in a curious position; for the filled-up space that surrounds them has been built upon for some distance, and new streets run between them and the sea, so that a stranger puzzles himself for some time to ascertain how the *Apollo* and *Niantic* became perched in the middle of the street. . . .<sup>19</sup>

Because San Francisco was built mainly of wood and canvas, frequent fires swept the town. Four conflagrations between 1849 and 1851 completely levelled the new city, the greatest of them all being the fire of May 4, 1851, which destroyed some 2000 buildings, including the *Niantic*, within several hours.

The wind that would have been considered high, though no fire had existed, was now raised to a hurricane by the actions of the flames that greedily sucked in the fresh air. The hollows under the planked streets were like great blowpipes, that stirred the fire to fearful activity. Through such strange channels, too . . . as dry and inflammable as tinder, the flames were communicated from street to street, and in an amazingly short time the whole surface, over an entire region, glowed, crackled and blazed, one immense fiery field. The reflection from the sky . . . was said to have been visible at Monterey, nearly a hundred miles off!<sup>20</sup>

The same account observed that even "fireproof" brick buildings were not safe: "Solid walls, supposedly fire-proof, crumbled in pieces. . . . Thick iron shutters and doors grew red hot and warped and . . . insured final destruction to everything within them."<sup>21</sup> (People were

literally baked alive when iron shutters and doors expanded with the heat and trapped the occupants inside.)

When the fire finally burned itself out by consuming all the available fuel, gone was the *Niantic*, whose topsides and hull were very early casualties. Only the lower portion of her hull remained, buried in the wet mud and sand that had buttressed her. Because her owners believed that she had been completely destroyed, they made no effort to salvage her hull or her stored merchandise. Unlucky businessmen like storekeepers Van Brunt and Verplanck, among others, lost almost forty cases of champagne which had been stored in her hold. Before the fire's ashes had cooled, however, new building was underway, and soon the site of the old *Niantic* was covered.

Erected over the *Niantic*'s remains was a three-story wood building whose ground floor housed commercial offices and stores while the second and third stories hosted "the up-to-date and comfortable accommodations of L. H. Robie's *Niantic* Hotel."<sup>22</sup>

Within five months of the great fire of May 3, 1851, the *Niantic* Hotel opened its doors, and on October 4, 1851, the San Francisco *Daily Herald* reported that:

The undersigned would respectfully announce that his new and commodious Hotel, situated at the corner of Clay and Sansome Streets, is now open for the reception of company. The house is located upon the site of the old ship *Niantic*, in the very heart of the city, and whether for the man of business or pleasure, the location is not excelled by any other in town. The parlors are spacious and tastefully furnished, while the sleeping rooms are airy, neat and pleasant. . . . The larder will be amply supplied with every substantial and luxury which the market affords, and the choicest wines and liquors will always be found at the bar. In short, the undersigned pledges himself that nothing will be wanting to render the *Niantic* Hotel an agreeable resort for either the traveler of business or pleasure.

L. H. Robie, Proprietor.

For the next twenty years, the *Niantic* Hotel opened its rooms to patrons, but with each of its four owners,

the standards of the hotel seemed to decline. The "unsavory proximity" of the Barbary Coast a few blocks away may have enhanced the problem.<sup>23</sup> The last years of the *Niantic* Hotel were ones of shady characters and of criminal activities, and in 1872, the building was demolished to make way for the construction of a new commercial building.

During the construction excited workmen unearthed the remains of the *Niantic* while excavating for the cellar. As reported in the *Alta*,

The old *Niantic* Hotel is a thing of the past—it has been torn down and carted off piecemeal. Yesterday the floors were "turned up" much to the gratification of the Micawber Convention, which has been in daily session at the corner of Clay and Sansome Streets since the work of the demolition commenced. The principal object of interest is the hull of the old ship *Niantic*, which formed the foundation of the building, and a portion of which is now clearly visible. The old hulk has lain there for over twenty-two years, and many San Franciscans distinctly remember the time when she was used as a storeship until the fire of May, 1851, which left nothing but the charred hulk of the old vessel. . . .<sup>24</sup>

Former San Francisco saloon owners T. A. Barry and B. A. Patten, however, recalled that the *Niantic* Hotel demolition uncovered more than just the ship's timbers:

The old hull at the time of the fire was imbedded in the mud some eight feet or below the waterline. At this line, after the conflagration, the debris was cleared away and the floor timbers of the hotel laid, covering and keeping safe from public knowledge stowed away in the remnant of the old hull, thirty-five baskets of champagne and many other artifacts in storage. Twenty-one years in storage! We have not learned whether any bill for this has been sent to Mr. Van Brunt; but the wine was placed in storage by that gentleman and his partner at that time—Mr. Verplanck. Their store was on Sansome Street, adjoining the *Niantic*. The wine was the Jacquesson Fils brand—a superior wine, very popular in California, where dry wines are always preferred. This long buried wine was found—or rather the bottles were found—in most remarkable preservation; the wires, and even the twine, being in better condition than many ships just off the voyage from France. Champagne



*Erected over the Niantic's remains in 1851 was a three-story office and hotel building. Once a respectable lodging place, it declined in stature and hosted criminal activities. Demolition of the building appears to be in progress in this photograph c.1872.*

deteriorates after the third year; but this wine had been so completely covered as to be almost excluded from the air, and some of the wine effervesced slightly on uncorking, and was of very fair flavor.<sup>25</sup>

Shortly after the discovery, Mr. C. Low began construction of a four-story brick commercial building on the site. Unbeknownst to the builder, however, he had only touched upon the *Niantic's* remains, and the new floor covered the ship once again.

Keeping with tradition, Low named his new building the Niantic Block. It stood at the corner of Clay and Sansome streets until 1906, when the earthquake and fire of April 18 demolished it. Before the ashes cooled, San Francisco once again began to rebuild, and just as the Niantic Hotel had risen from the ashes of the *Niantic*, a new building was scheduled to grow from the ashes of the Niantic Block.

Designed as a four-story structure of reinforced concrete, the new office was the work of Lorenzo Scatena, a prominent produce merchant and stepfather of A. P. Giannini, the founder of the Bank of Italy (today's Bank of America). In keeping with tradition, the building was named the Niantic Building. As construction began on the structure, workmen dredged up more remains of the old *Niantic*. At the time of this second unearthing, bystanders removed timbers from the stern area of the ship, including planking from the interior of the hull. Also taken away were some of the ship's "spoons and copper."<sup>26</sup> To facilitate the pouring of the new founda-

tion, workmen then removed part of the keelson at the stern. This led many to believe that the ship had been totally unearthed or destroyed, and the newspapers said as much.

Also retrieved at this time was more champagne. Years later, one longtime San Francisco resident recalled that her father had been given a bottle which was "put away, to be used on some special family occasion, which was many years later, on a wedding anniversary. The cork of the bottle was drawn with much ceremony, but on the first sip there was a great splattering by the anticipating partakers—the bottle had been submerged so long that the salt water had forced through the cork."<sup>27</sup> A newspaper writer later surmised that more of the wine had been hidden away in the exclusive wine cellar of a San Francisco millionaire who no doubt also received a similar surprise.<sup>28</sup>

Believing in 1919 that the ship had been destroyed, the Native Sons of the Golden West erected a bronze plaque on the new building. The false obituary read:

The emigrant ship *Niantic* stood on this spot in the early days when the water came up to Montgomery Street. Converted to other uses, it was covered with a shingle roof with offices and stores on the deck, at the level of which was constructed a wide balcony surmounted by a veranda. The hull was divided into warehouses, entered by doorways on the sides.

The fire of May 3, 1851, destroyed all but the submerged hulk which was later utilized as the foundation for the Niantic Hotel, a famous hostelry which stood until 1872.<sup>29</sup>



*When workmen excavated the site at Sansome and Clay streets, they struck the remains of the original Niantic. Only the stern section could be uncovered; the bow presumably extends to the west under Transamerica Building's Redwood Park (visible at top of photograph). The ship's stern appears pointed because the ship burned down to the bottom of the hull where it narrows to the single stern post. Photograph by Ann Howard.*

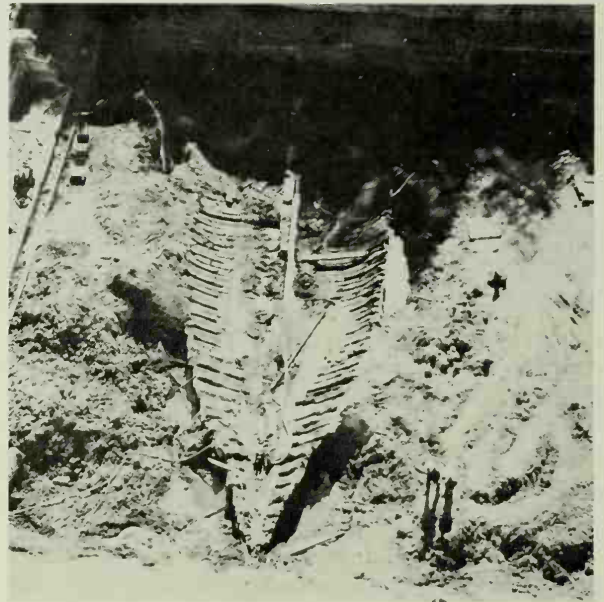
The *Niantic* lay at peace until early 1976, when developers announced plans to demolish the old Niantic Building and build a modern highrise on the site. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared by a private consultant for the San Francisco Department of City Planning identified the site as being the historic location of the *Niantic*. Although information indicated that the ship's remains had been removed in 1907, the possibility of uncovering artifacts was not ruled out, and the EIR noted that "many artifacts from the previous site use were uncovered (e.g. timbers, glassware, even full bottles of wine)" at the time the Niantic Building was built. Cautiously, the EIR stipulated that the San Francisco Maritime Museum should be notified if any artifacts were found.

In early 1978, workmen began excavation for foundations for the new building. On April 28, they struck what appeared to be the bottom of a ship. In accordance with the EIR, the site's owner and developer, J. Patrick Mahoney, contacted the San Francisco Maritime Museum about the discovery.<sup>30</sup>

Before museum personnel arrived, workmen had already cleared away part of the hull. The stern section was exposed, with the bow extending into the side-wall of the excavation and onto another piece of adjacent property. Maritime Museum Curator Harlan Soeten quickly ascertained that more remains of the *Niantic* had been found.<sup>31</sup>

In order for the building construction to continue, the ship had to be removed from the site. After determining that the cost of simply removing the ship would exceed \$630,000, the museum gamely began a campaign to raise the sum.<sup>32</sup>

In the interim, Maritime Museum personnel hurriedly salvaged accessible artifacts. The section near the *Niantic's* bow had not been disturbed during the previous construction work, and resting in the mud were the artifacts that had been placed in the hull during the gold rush: tools, floor coverings, guns, writing utensils,



foodstuffs, and even some cases of champagne.<sup>33</sup> Most of the artifacts were taken to the Maritime Museum, but fragile items were put in cold storage.

Although the Maritime Museum could not obtain funds to preserve the ship's remains, the developer agreed to remove parts of the ship intact at his own expense. Before this removal on May 11, the National Trust for Historic Preservation funded a photogrammetric study of the ship from which to compile detailed measured drawings of the ship's remains.<sup>34</sup>

With drills and jackhammers, workmen detached and then removed an eight-foot cross-section of the hull from the ship. The rest of the hull was bulldozed, and other structural timbers were removed for storage, along with the intact section of the stern and the ship's rudder, the ship's windlass (which was used to raise the anchor), and over two tons of assorted hull pieces. An inventory of the museum's collections, including the *Niantic* artifacts, was completed by the National Park

Service in the summer of 1978, when the San Francisco Maritime Museum became part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area of the National Park system.<sup>35</sup>

Although the remains of the *Niantic* were subsequently denied eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places, plans to preserve and display her remains and her artifacts are being made. In the future, visitors to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area will be afforded a unique view of gold rush San Francisco through the preserved remains of the storeship *Niantic* as she was found in the mud of Yerba Buena Cove.

Frank Marryat's drawing is from *Mountains and Molehills* (London, 1855). The painting of the *Niantic* is courtesy Dionis Coffin Riggs, and the log page is courtesy Mrs. Alan Look, both of West Tisbury, Massachusetts. The sketch of the ship is from the *San Francisco Call*, March 17, 1895. All the reproductions, except the excavation view loaned by the National Park Service, are courtesy the National Maritime Museum of San Francisco.

## Notes

1. Forrest R. Holdcamper, *List of American-Flag Merchant Vessels that Received Certificates of Enrollment or Registry at the Port of New York 1789-1867* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives, 1968).
2. F. S. Matthews, "The Earliest Days of the Ship *Niantic*," *Society of California Pioneers Quarterly*, 6 (October, 1929): 135.
3. Robert Bennett Forbes, *Personal Reminiscences* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1892), p. 157.
4. Matthews, "Niantic," p. 135.
5. Robert O'Brien, "The Story of the *Niantic*," April 13, 1949, from a series of articles clipped from an unidentified newspaper, on file at the California Historical Society Library.
6. F. C. Matthews Papers, on file at the San Francisco History Room, San Francisco Public Library, Civic Center.
7. "Log of the Ship *Niantic*," entry for April 7, 1849, from a xerox copy in the San Francisco Maritime Museum.
8. Emma Mayhew Whiting and Henry Hough Beetle, *Whaling Wives* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953), p. 20.
9. "Log *Niantic*," entry for May 2, 1849; Whiting and Beetle, *Whaling Wives*, p. 20.
10. Several *Niantic* passengers left accounts of their historic voyage. John S. McCollum published his tale in a book entitled *California As I Saw It*; John M. Cushing published his recollections seventy years later. One passenger, known only as "R.J.C.," composed a letter which was published in the San

Francisco *Call* of March 26, 1893. Captain Cleveland also left memoirs of the voyage, and the *Niantic*'s logbook remains in the hands of a Cleveland family descendant. Dale S. Morgan, ed. *California As I Saw It, By John S. McCollum* (Los Gatos: Talisman Press, 1960); John Morland Cushing, "From New York to San Francisco . . .," *Society of California Pioneers Quarterly*, October, 1929, 119-134; Dionis Coffin Riggs, *From Off Island* (New York: McGraw-Hill Books, 1940), p. 329.

11. O'Brien, "The Story of the *Niantic*," July 27, 1949.
12. Matthews Papers.
13. James A. B. Scherer, *The First Forty-Niner and the Story of the Golden Tea Caddy* (New York, 1925), pp. 83-84.
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15. Whiting and Beetle, *Whaling Wives*, p. 21.
16. As quoted in Franklin Soule, John Gihon, and James Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1855), p. 292.
17. "Letter of R.J.C." *San Francisco Call*, March 26, 1893.
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19. Samuel Francis (Frank) Marryat; *Mountains and Molehills: Recollections of a Burnt Journal* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1855), pp. 51-53.
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21. Soule, *Annals of San Francisco*, p. 331.
22. O'Brien, "The Story of the *Niantic*," April 15, 1949.
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24. *Alta California*, August 2, 1872.
25. T. A. Barry and B. A. Patten; *Men and Memories of San Francisco in the Spring of 1850* (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1873), pp. 133-134.
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29. Environmental Impact Report for the Pacific Mutual Building, Clay and Sansome streets, San Francisco, filed in January, 1976.
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31. Ibid.
32. National Park Service Files, *Niantic*, Memoranda.
33. Isabel Bullen, "Preliminary Report of an Excavation on the Gold Rush Ship *Niantic*," *San Francisco Maritime Museum*, May, 1978.
34. *Fresno Bee*, June 2, 1978. Professor Kendish Jeyapalan of California State University, Fresno, compiled this study.
35. James P. Delgado and Gordon S. Chappell, "National Register Nomination for the Artifacts and Remains of the Gold Rush Ship *Niantic*" (San Francisco: National Park Service, Western Regional Office, Office of the Regional Historian), June, 1978.

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# a glimpse into the Niantic's hold

*The hull of the ship Niantic, a buried gold rush relic that had been rediscovered in 1872 and 1907, made its latest appearance in San Francisco in 1978 when construction began on a new office building on the northwest corner of Clay and Sansome streets. Beached in 1849, the Niantic had been uncovered during construction work in 1872 and 1907. A newspaper account of the 1907 discovery suggested that the remains of the hull had been fully removed.*

*In May of 1978, the hull was uncovered yet again. Accordingly, the building contractor who was excavating the area informed the San Francisco Maritime Museum (then a privately-funded non-profit organization, now the National Park Service's National Maritime Museum at San Francisco). Receiving news of the discovery on May 3, museum staff members were allowed on the site to examine the vessel, as construction work continued at a slower pace. On Thursday, May 4, the museum was granted permission to excavate the site after the contractor's crew had finished its day's work. Uncertain that it would be allowed more than one evening to work, the museum staff began a "rapid rescue dig" rather than abandon the discovery to the bulldozers. While the artifacts discovered are still being studied, this report on the excavation and the objects can now be offered.*

Construction crews discovered the remains of the *Niantic* along the entire south side of the eighty-five-foot construction site at Clay and Sansome. Resting parallel to Clay Street, she lay with her stern at Sansome Street and her bow apparently under the Transamerica Building's Redwood Park to the west of the site. Her hull sat about twenty feet below the current street level in wet bay mud.

All that remained of the vessel was the bottom of her hull—keel, frames (ribs), bottom planking with copper

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Isabel Bullen, formerly an archaeologist with Colonial Williamsburg, is the Photograph Archivist at the National Maritime Museum at San Francisco.



Among the artifacts in the *Niantic's* hull were (top row) a bayonet, padlock, clipboard top (?), blue and white earthenware fragment; (second row) metal label, duck's head paper holder; (third row) pistol, champagne bottle, candlestick holder, spike; and (fourth row) bottle seal and axhead (objects not all reproduced to same scale).



sheathing, partial ceiling (inner planking), and part of her keelson. On each side, the ribs extended about two feet above the keel. These remaining parts of the hull were presumably protected by mud when the *Niantic* burned on May 4, 1851.

When the museum staff began its work on May 4, exactly 127 years after the *Niantic's* destruction, the contractor's workmen had cleared almost all the mud

and sand deposits above and in the hull except for a small area at the west end of the site. Here the remaining two feet of fill over the floor of the vessel reached to the top of the ribs. This fill extended about eighteen feet from the west end of the site.

The earlier discoveries of the *Niantic's* hull had been made during construction of buildings on the lot at the corner of Clay and Sansome streets. The 1978 construc-

tion site, however, covered a larger area, and it appeared that the fill at the west end of the new site had lain under a different building. Members of the museum staff who saw the site on May 3 observed concrete paving lying over the vessel's remains and the burned debris; this may have been the floor of a building which was laid directly over the *Niantic* after the fire of May 4, 1851. This paving was removed by the evening of May 4, when the staff gained full access to the site.

Because the area at the west of the site would contain the vessel's only possible undisturbed fill, the museum staff concentrated its efforts there. A plot fifteen-by-twenty-five feet centered around the keel was marked off for exploration, with an unexcavated four-foot-wide strip to the west of the area left to avoid possible collapse of the west wall of the excavation.

This area's surface fill was littered with construction debris and loose earth mixed with fragments of nineteenth-century bottle glass. Much of the glass had been melted out of shape and turned blue by heat.

Beneath this debris in a deposit of muddy fill rested a rich concentration of nineteenth-century artifacts. North of the keel (starboard side) and standing upright on the hull was a small press, possibly a copy or book-binder's press. Nearby was a second press, a variety of small artifacts including two stoneware bottles (one filled with ink), pencils and pen nibs, a set of small scale weights, and a beautiful duck's head paper holder. To the west was an open wooden box containing what had been a stack of books or leather book-bindings decorated with gold leaf. All these may have been a collection of stationery supplies or the contents of an office. South and west of these artifacts against the north side of the keelson were tightly rolled bales of textiles. To the south of the keelson, the crew found champagne bottles, some broken but many still intact with corks and wine. Stored in wooden cases against the keelson, they had been lying flat, some with straw or wicker packing.

On their first evening of exploration, the Maritime

Museum staff knew they had found a very rich site, not only in the concentration of finds but in the degree of their preservation. The wet fill had apparently preserved organic materials that would not have survived in normal ground. While the archaeological crew could have spent days cataloging information and removing artifacts, they feared that anything left in the ground might be destroyed by bulldozers the next day, and so they quickly sketched and photographed and removed the artifacts to safety.

Construction work continued on the *Niantic* site on Friday, May 5, but that evening the site developer agreed to halt construction until Monday afternoon, when estimates for the cost of removing the intact hull could be received. In the interim, the museum staff was permitted to continue its archaeological investigation.

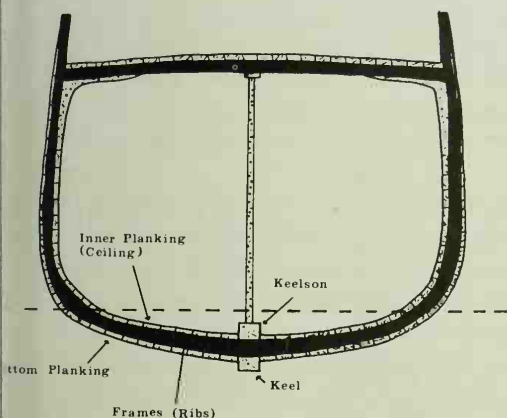
Naturally, state, federal, and museum archaeologists attending the meeting would have preferred to postpone construction for a longer period so that a detailed excavation could be made. But because it seemed that a three-day stay was all that would be granted, the museum staff was asked to continue digging and thereby save some information and artifacts rather than risk total loss.

The archaeologists faced an imposing task that weekend. Two-thirds of the site designated for exposure remained to be excavated, as did the rest of the hull and the surrounding area. Although the construction crew had avoided digging in the fill inside the hull, a bulldozer had run over the ground and filled the partially excavated area with debris and loose earth.

In the course of removing these new mud deposits from the site on Saturday, the staff found many objects that meshed with their earlier discoveries—pencils and book leather, for instance. When they finally reached undisturbed material, they found many more rolls of cloth to the north of the keelson. The cloth had been stored upright in crates, but the bulldozer had destroyed the crate tops.

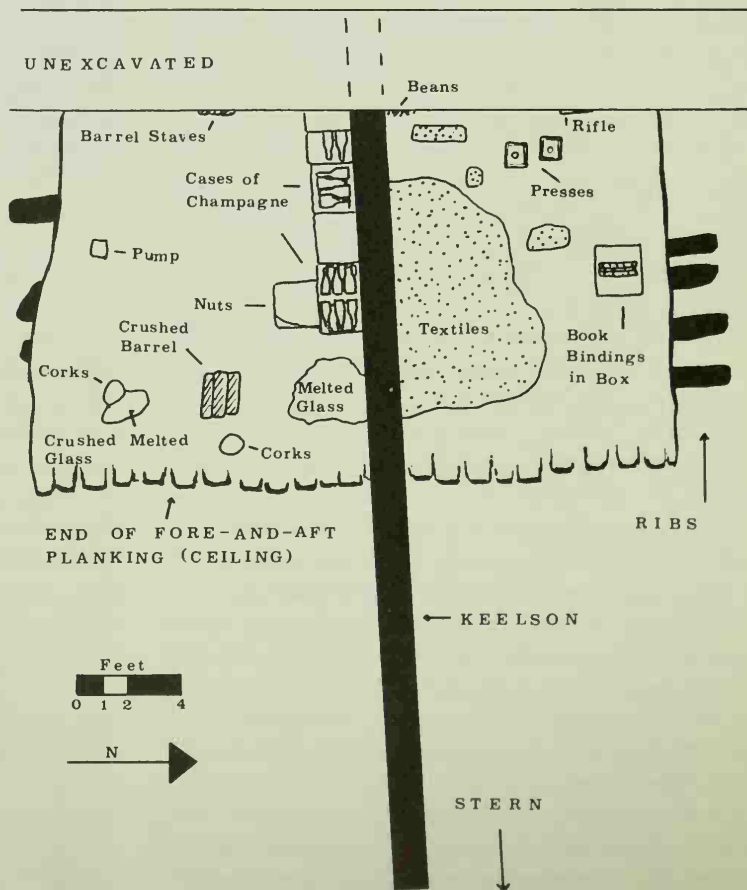


Racing against time, the crew uncovered groups of artifacts lying about the keelson at the end of the exposed hull. Before bulldozers destroyed the Niantic's timbers, a section of the hull was preserved (visible behind the pile of bulldozed timbers).



This simplified drawing shows a cross-section of a single-decked wooden vessel. The Niantic's hull burned to the level indicated by the dotted horizontal line, and only the bottom of the hull remained.

RIGHT: Grouped about the keelson were artifacts ranging from book bindings to nuts.





Near the sides of the ship north of the keelson and west of the presses amid burned material were found metal parts of several guns, including a flintlock pistol and a percussion cap rifle. A leather coat untouched by fire was also found in the area.

South of the keelson, the excavators uncovered more cases of champagne stacked two or three deep in a vertical pile next to the keelson. Nearby were several boxes of as yet unidentified nuts or beans. The remains of several crushed barrels were also uncovered, along with a deposit of straight-sided corks. The layer of intact bottles near the keelson ended about thirteen feet from the west end of the excavation. East of this area, crushed fragments of melted bottle glass were found down to the bottom of the hull interior.

A section of concrete paving found in debris below the level of the vessel's ribs south of the keelson may have been from a later building. A small mechanical pump with a fragmentary inscription in French located near the southern edge of the vessel's ribs may also have been from a later era.

When the staff attempted to dig outside the hull, the excavation filled with water, making it impossible to continue exterior digging. Accordingly, the crew hastily built a drainage ditch from this area to a lower part of the site to avoid the risk of flooding the vessel's interior.

After completely removing the fill in the *Niantic's* hull, it became evident that the deposits at the west end of the site had been lying on the interior planking (ceiling) of the vessel over the ribs. This planking ended about sixteen or seventeen feet from the west wall of the site, the rest presumably having been removed during the excavations in 1872 or 1907. Only further excavation can tell what remains inside the vessel under the Redwood Park to the west.

On Monday, May 7, it became apparent that the cost of saving the *Niantic's* hull intact was prohibitive, and a team of experts photogrammetrically recorded the hull

so that accurately measured drawings could be made of the remains. Finally, at the expense of the developer, two large, intact sections of the hull were removed from the construction site—the excavated portion towards the bow, which still lay buried, and the stern. The rest of the hull was bulldozed, although several large timbers were saved by the museum. Then construction workers resumed laying the foundations for their building, and the *Niantic's* grave was again covered over.

Detailed study of the *Niantic's* artifacts has only just begun. Most of the non-organic finds have been cleaned and sorted, and many of the organic finds are in cold storage awaiting decisions on conservation methods. The most significant items have been sent to the National Park Service conservation laboratory at Harpers Ferry, Virginia.

Many of the *Niantic's* artifacts relate to gold rush food and drink. About seven dozen full-size and a dozen half-size champagne bottles were recovered intact from the storage area south of the keelson. Many still contain wine, although the wire holding the corks tight had corroded away. Stored on their sides in wooden cases, the bottles appear to have been disturbed, possibly by the 1906 earthquake, because whole and broken bottles lay side by side. Of ordinary wine-bottle shape with a thick, flat string rim below the lip and a high basal kick, they have no visible mold seams. Their glass is of medium-to-dark green in color, and their overall appearance suggests a mid-nineteenth century date. The wine remaining in the bottles is muddy pinkish-red in color, sedimented, and terrible tasting. If the champagne found in 1872 was truly of "very fair flavor," it has now fully deteriorated.<sup>1</sup> According to the same report, the wine carried the Jacquesson Fils label, that of a company which is still in business in France today.

*Keepers of the storeship had stacked crates of champagne bottles along the keelson. Still holding champagne, the bottles have a large basal kick, as shown in the base fragment.*



Many nineteenth-century bottles of a different type, possibly beer bottles, were also found on the site, although only one was intact. Found scattered over a large area, many of the fragments had been burned and melted into a blue porcelain-like substance. The unburned samples of this second type of bottle exhibit a thick, rounded lip with a trace of a string rim and a small, rounded basal kick with a central nipple. Of dark green glass, they show no visible mold seams.

Also found were bottle bases of thick black glass carrying the molded inscriptions "E. R. Bristol" and "Ricketts, Bristol." The Ricketts company of Bristol, England, which produced the first machine-made bottles, operated from about 1814 to 1853.<sup>2</sup> The crew also found unattached bottle seals made of light green glass carrying the inscriptions "Old Madeira" and "Xeres" (sherry).

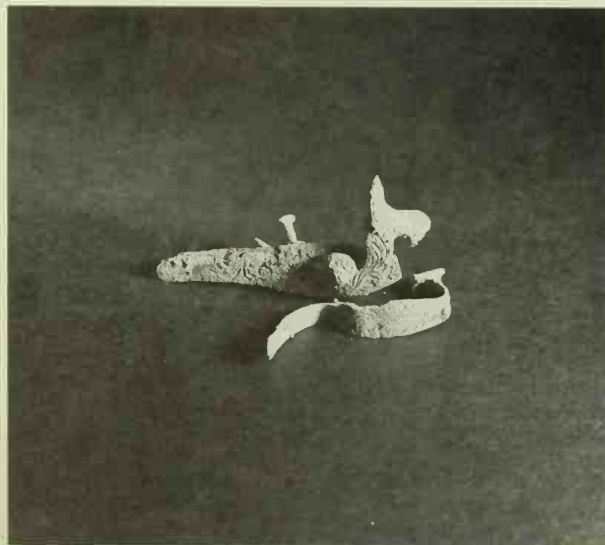
The museum staff also discovered two metal labels of heavy foil which might have been attached to packing cases. One was damaged with only the right half remaining. The second label, complete but slightly crumpled, reads:

A. & E. PELLIER FRES  
SUCRS DE J. CONEAU  
MEDAILLE A L'EXPO DE PARIS EN 1834  
ANDOUILLETES  
TRUFFEES  
AU MANS ET AU CROIS[IC?]

Carrying references to gold medals received in 1834 and 1844, the labels might have looked backward to medals received long before their contents were produced. The imported sausages and truffles listed on the second label indicate the existence of luxuries in gold rush San Francisco.

Another category of artifacts discovered in the *Niantic's* hull was stationery supplies and office equipment, found north of the keelson. Most important are two metal presses, each about eighteen inches high and about thirteen-by-seventeen inches at the base. Both have a

*Gun parts found in the Niantic include (clockwise from top): flintlock gun lock and part of barrel; bayonet; trigger guard; and percussion cap pistol.*



*The decoration on this trigger guard and part of a gun lock have lost definition after being buried in Bay mud for over a century.*

central screw which moves an upper plate down onto the heavy base plate. Perhaps they were presses for making copies of letters or for bookbinding. Fragments of book leather were found between the plates of one press.

Two stacks of gold-tooled leather book bindings were also found nearby, one resting in an open wooden box that sat on the hull planking. One leather fragment carries the word "Journal" on it, and a separate piece of book spine holds the maker's name, "Wm Rose N.Y." Probably these journals, if such they were, were piled together until the paper between the covers rotted away. Now in cold storage, they await further study.

Found near these items were several dozen pencils. Circular in section, one was marked "Faber" and several others read, "Calligraphic Black Lead, E. Wolff [?] London." Pen nib holders, metal pen nibs, and two small, brown stoneware bottles, one of which still contained what appears to be ink, were also close at hand.

Additional nearby finds were two brass-plated objects which look like clips from the top of a clipboard, a set of small circular scale weights, and three small metal gauges. These gauges are about two inches long with circular brass cases containing square-sectioned metal rods marked with numbers. Also found here was one of the most attractive artifacts from the site, a decorative brass duck's head paper holder.

One of the most important discoveries on the *Niantic* was the two to three dozen rolls of cloth stored on the north side of the keelson. Tightly rolled and about six inches in diameter and two feet high, most of the rolls were stacked vertically in wooden crates.

The textile material has been identified as an early form of linoleum. Backed with a vegetable fiber coated with a linseed oil base, the rolls have colorful geometric designs in yellow, white, red, and blue. Perhaps this was the "oil carpeting" included in the cargo lists of vessels arriving in gold rush San Francisco.<sup>3</sup> Extremely fragile, the rolls have been kept damp in cold storage until a



suitable preservation treatment can be determined.

Many miscellaneous items also surfaced during the excavation. Several metal parts of guns or rifles were found, some in burned deposits north of the keelson, including a flintlock pistol, a percussion-cap rifle or musket, a small pistol, a rifle or musket barrel, a small gun lock, a rifle sight, a hammer, a decorated trigger guard, a bayonet, and a bullet mold. The *Niantic's* original wooden log windlass was also uncovered by the construction crews. The excavation's oldest dateable artifact was a Spanish silver piece from the reign of Charles IV (1788-1808), found unstratified. Spanish currency was still common in mid-century San Francisco.

Small amounts of nineteenth-century ceramic material—including stoneware, transfer-printed ware, and Chinese porcelain—and metal spikes, nails, sheet iron pieces, and copper sheathing from the hull were also unearthed. In addition, the museum crew dug up iron shovel blades, an axe head, a knife blade, a pocket knife, a scissors handle, a door lock and door bolt, a trunk handle, a buckle, a brass candlestick, a pair of brass dividers, and a telescope eyepiece.

In retrospect, the most significant archaeological discovery of the *Niantic* excavation was that the largest number of artifacts—the champagne, the rolls of textiles, and the presses and other office supplies—were placed in the bottom of the hull of the storeship, this almost certainly between late 1849 and the fire of May 4, 1851. They could not have been cargo on the *Niantic* before she reached San Francisco, because she was a whaler, not a cargo carrier. The artifacts were stored in the bilges of the vessel, compartments that would have been wet at sea and that would have been filled with ballast to keep the ship properly trimmed. For her artifacts to have been stored at a later date, another fire must have raged on the site after that. Finally, when the *Niantic's* hull was uncovered in 1872, the ship was considered a curiosity and her champagne assumed to date

from the gold rush. No mention was made then of her hull having been used after 1851.

A portion of the hull's interior fill remained intact until 1978 because the west end of the hull had been protected under a different building lot or lots when the several *Niantic* buildings were erected. A 1906 lot map suggests this, and, in the excavation site itself, the remains of a small brick building were visible in the south wall of the site to the west of the *Niantic* Building lot. This brick building would have covered much of the area where the museum crew found the undisturbed artifacts. Presumably the shallow building foundations erected there after 1851 never exposed the *Niantic's* hull.

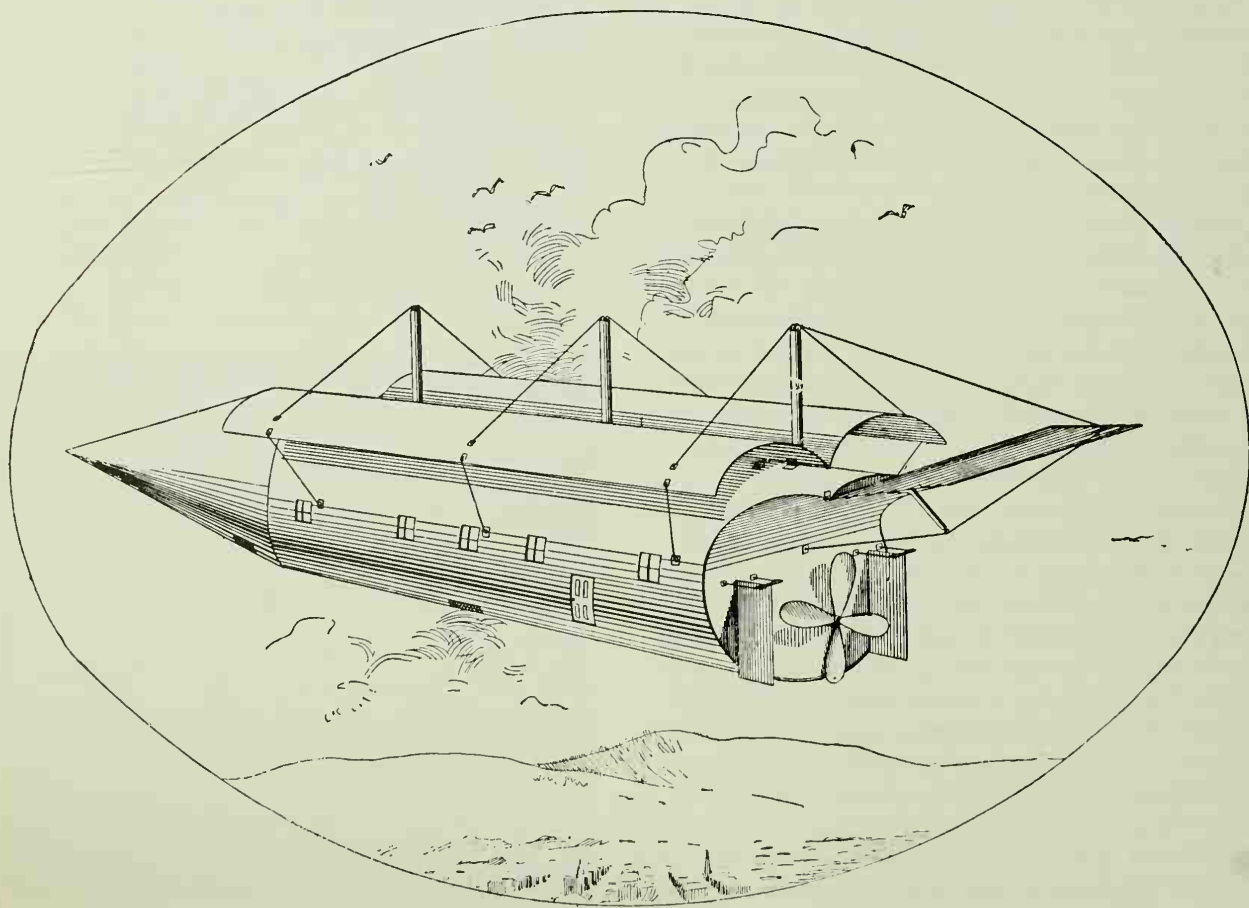
More of the *Niantic's* secrets may yet be discovered. Only about ninety feet of her one-hundred-twenty-foot length have been explored, because her bow section most likely lies under Redwood Park. Perhaps time and money will one day be available to properly excavate her remains with the care and attention she deserves.

The poster reproduced on page 327 is designed by Jerry Berman Associates and copyright J. P. Mahoney & Co. The drawings and the photograph of the bottles *in situ* are by Isabel Bullen. The photograph of the bulldozer is by John Maounis, and all the others are by John Kortum.

## Notes

1. T. A. Barry, and B. A. Patten, *Men and Memories of San Francisco in the "Spring of '50"* (San Francisco, A. F. Bancroft, 1873), p. 136.
2. Ivor Noel Hume, "The Glass Wine Bottle in Colonial Virginia," *Journal of Glass Studies*, 3 (1961): 105.
3. Louis J. Rasmussen, *San Francisco Ship Passenger Lists*, Vol. III, November 7, 1851 to June 17, 1852, San Francisco Historic Records, San Francisco, 1967.

# "Navigating the Upper Strata" and the Quest for Dirigibility



*Built of aluminum and equipped with giant wings, the airship of Dr. C. A. Smith was confidently predicted to land under the Statue of Liberty just 40 hours after leaving San Francisco.*

The sight of a silvery-skinned dirigible gliding silently and effortlessly overhead offers a pleasant, almost ethereal reminder of the early days of aviation when man first mastered travel through the air. Impractical in today's era of supersonic jets, the airship once seemed the perfect form of long-distance transportation.

Few present-day admirers realize that the history of the dirigible in California dates back to 1849 when Rufus Porter of New York first proposed flying argonauts to the gold fields in a giant "aerial locomotive." Shortly thereafter, ingenious and intrepid San Franciscans, capitalizing on the area's superior weather conditions, experimented with a variety of schemes to link California with the East Coast by air. An airborne alternative to the railroad and stage, many believed, would bring fame and fortune to the lucky aeronaut at the controls, and the resulting attempts to achieve that goal produced one of the most compelling chapters in California's transportation history.

By the mid-nineteenth century, many of the world's aeronauts considered the airship to be the ultimate flying machine. Attempts to control and direct spherical balloons had failed, and engines capable of sustaining flight by slightly heavier-than-air machines did not yet exist. On the other hand, these pioneer "birdmen" reasoned, if an engine and rudder could be attached to an elongated gas-filled balloon, the age-old problem of flight might be solved. This notion led to the invention of the dirigible, which, simply put, is a balloon that can be steered or given direction.

From the 1860s to the early 1900s, dozens of local inventors risked life, limb, and reputation to perfect the dirigible. Seeking to transcend the hardships and dangers of overland travel, would-be aeronauts produced fantastic plans for huge airships capable of transporting hundreds of passengers and tons of freight at speeds in excess of 100 miles per hour. The Statue of Liberty, predicted one optimistic inventor, would be reached only three days after leaving San Francisco.

Enthralled by these prospects, San Franciscans willingly gambled great sums of money to finance these experiments. Models of flying machines were exhibited in public buildings, and local newspapers promoted any plan that promised transcontinental flight. Many of the seemingly plausible schemes were calculated merely to hoodwink the gullible, while others, for all the accompanying fanfare, ended as expensive blunders.

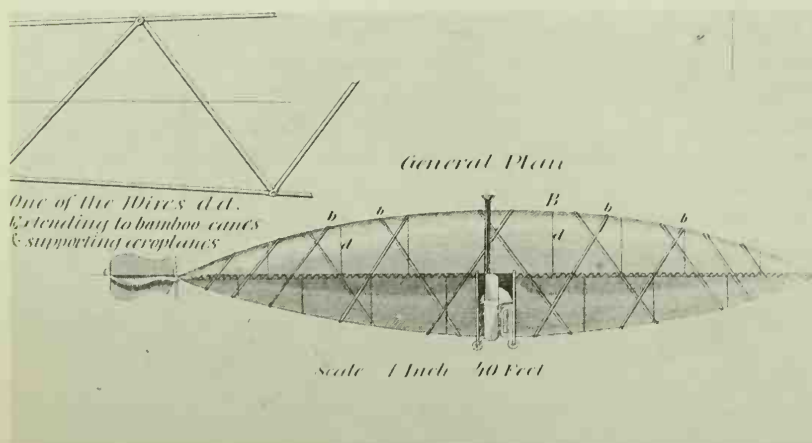
Although the Wright Brothers are the best remembered aviation experimenters, a number of San Francisco inventors operating in obscurity achieved many important aviation firsts. In the same year that land-lovers completed the transcontinental railroad (1869), a balloon-glider made America's first powered flight near San Francisco. In 1904, a former tight-rope walker flew the country's first dirigible—over a baseball field in Oakland.

Frederick Marriott, publisher of San Francisco's *Newsletter*, was California's first and most remarkable airship inventor. An Englishman by birth and co-founder of the *Illustrated London News*, Marriott had dabbled in aviation as early as the 1840s. Traveling to California in 1848 as a gold seeker, he soon discovered that his literary skills would reap him greater rewards. In addition to founding the influential *Newsletter*, the publisher started a half-dozen other tabloids and counted among his friends such literary titans as Samuel Clemens, Bret Harte, Ambrose Bierce, and Fitzhugh Ludlow.

After amassing a small fortune in publishing, the Britisher turned his attention to aerial experimentation. In 1866, the flying editor, as he was called, incorporated the Aerial Steam Navigation Company to raise \$1 million for his ethereal avocation. Utilizing the *Newsletter* for publicity, Marriott attracted several prominent San Franciscans as stockholders, and no less a financier than William C. Ralston served as the company treasurer.

Ambitious and future-oriented, Marriott proposed building a fleet of airships that would compete with the





Proclaimed as the Eighth Wonder of the World, the Avitor Hermes, Jr., made its maiden flight around San Mateo's Shell Mound Race Track in 1869. The *Alta California*, unimpressed with Marriott's invention, described it as a "winged whale."

This side view of the 150-foot Avitor depicts the guiding rudder at the hind end, the engine and passenger room in the middle, and the wires used to support the gas-filled bag. Lionel Varicas, Marriott's engineer, drew these plans.

*Frederick Marriott (1805-1884), the cherub-like editor of the prestigious San Francisco Newsletter, invented the Avitor, America's first self-propelled lighter-than-air flying machine.*



demonstration outdoors. Before a startled and cheering audience, the craft rose gently from the ground and began to fly. An excited reporter from the San Francisco *Times* described this milestone in aviation history:

The morning was beautiful and still—scarcely a breath of air stirring. The conditions were favorable for success. The gasometer was fully inflated, and the model was floated out of the building. In six minutes steam was got up—the rudder set to give a slight curve to the course of the vessel—and the valves opened. With the first turn of the propellers she rose until the rate of five miles an hour was attained. The position of the rudder caused her to describe a great circle, around which she passed twice, occupying about five minutes each time. Lines had been fastened to both bow and stern, which were held by two men, who followed her track, and had sufficient ado to keep up with her at a “dog trot.”

Clearly proud of his achievement, Marriott's article in the *Newsletter* further extolled the potential of his invention:

Next in point of speed to the telegraph, it opens communication between distant points, bearing its men and messages through the air, while the railroad drags its heavy burden of freight. . . . No savages in war paint shall interrupt its passage over and across our continent . . . no waiting for trade winds; no necessity of lying becalmed under tropical suns; no extortions from huge corporations who monopolize the great routes of travel.

The *Avitor's* maiden voyage represented the first successful controlled flight of a powered vehicle in the United States. Although the ship was unmanned, Marriott had achieved a major step in the conquest of the air, and newspapers across the country and Europe carried the exciting news of the Shell Mound flight. The London *Dispatch* hailed Marriott and prophetically exclaimed: “The wonderful California flying machine, we are informed, will soon wing its way across the Rocky Mountains from San Francisco to New York, to the great loss of the now superfluous Pacific Railway.” One publication, however, remained unimpressed. The

transcontinental railroad and link the Golden State to the east via the airways. As a first step, the editor hired a construction crew and established an aviation works at Shell Mound Park in San Mateo County.

After several irritating delays, Marriott unveiled a prototype airship named the *Avitor Hermes, Jr.* Looking like a fat cigar, the *Avitor* improved on previous inventions by combining the lifting power of lighter-than-air balloons with the wings and engine of heavier-than-air flying machines. Measuring thirty-seven feet in length, the *Avitor* was powered by a small brass alcohol-burning steam engine which drove two propellers. For stability, Marriott affixed wings to the sides of the hydrogen-filled balloon envelope. Most importantly, he attached a rudder to the stern which could control the airship's direction and altitude. This last feature made the *Avitor* more than a balloon; it was a dirigible.

On July 2, 1869, the *Avitor* made its maiden flight within the safe confines of the Shell Mound hangar. Two days later, a confident Marriott gave a public

Rufus Porter, the editor of the *Scientific American*, published his plans for an aerial locomotive in a book entitled *The Practicability of Traveling Pleasantly and Safely from New York to California in Three Days* (New York, 1849). Porter was the first to develop a plan for transcontinental flight.

prestigious *Scientific American* discounted Marriott's achievement by pointing out that the *Avitor* could only fly in calm weather and could not negotiate headwinds. Marriott retorted, "We do not expect to build Rome in a day."

Following the two successful flights, Marriott brought the *Avitor* to the Mechanic's Pavilion in San Francisco for all to see. Making daily flights inside the huge structure to the fanfare of marching bands, this engineering wonder impressed school children and adults alike, including one young writer, Bret Harte, who composed a poem in honor of the *Avitor*.

Buoyed by the success of his prototype, the flying editor next announced plans for the construction of a full-size airship which would fly at speeds of 150 miles per hour and reach New York in three days. To attract financial support, he displayed a drawing of the new dirigible flying over the Golden Gate with engineering drawings showing details of the engine, propellers, and balloon cylinder.

In the face of Marriott's optimistic predictions for transcontinental flight, a financial panic in the 1870s scuttled his plans, and the full-size *Avitor* never became airborne. Regardless, Marriott's invention could never have succeeded because steam engines in the 1870s could not produce sufficient speed to permit the dirigible to fly against prevailing winds. Undaunted, however, the ingenious editor turned to designing heavier-than-air machines and in the process coined the word "aeroplane." Although Marriott died a frustrated and unappreciated aeronaut, to this man of letters must go the acclaim of inventing America's first dirigible.

Dreams of lighter-than-air transcontinental flight did not die with Marriott, although several years passed before anyone revived the idea. On September 1, 1896, the San Francisco *Call* carried a large, curious drawing

of a mammoth rocket-like airship with flapping wings soaring over the city. This sleek flying machine *a la Jules Verne* was the brainchild of Dr. Charles A. Smith of San Francisco.

The imaginative doctor promised that this cone-shaped vessel would reach New York City in a mere forty hours at speeds in excess of 100 miles per hour. To attract financial support for his Atlantic and Pacific Aerial Navigation Company, Smith displayed a working model at the Spreckels Building in San Francisco. The *Call* article described the model as follows:

It looks just like the business end of a rocket. It has a conical point, a round body, and at the rear end a brass fan whirrs lustily every time a live wire is hitched on to the electric motor in the interior of the concern. Two wings, like those of a beetle, rise and fall from the top of the cylinder, and a few small windows and three rudders make up the latest of flying machines. . . . Will it work? There is no doubt about it, say the inventors, and they point proudly to the model as it rests on two stools in a shop on Market Street.

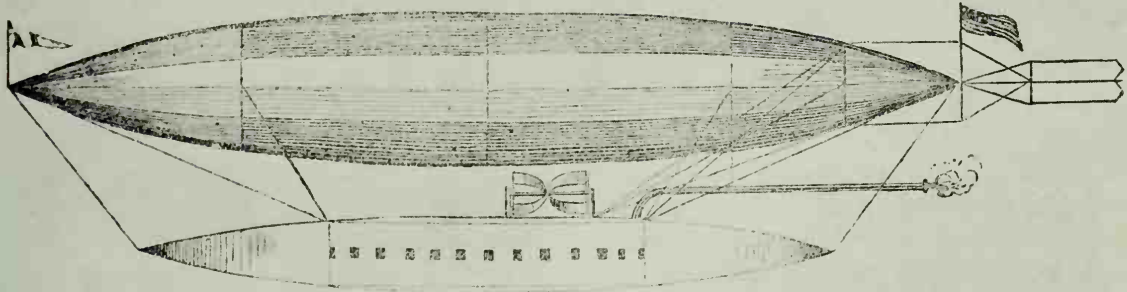
While Dr. Smith's model, which was built of zinc, undoubtedly fascinated onlookers, his idea for a full-size airship was even more unbelievable. Certainly the attachment of flapping wings to a hydrogen balloon was a novel approach. Moreover, Smith proposed to construct the entire machine out of aluminum. Measuring 105 feet in length, the rigid airship was to be powered by gasoline or electricity working a rear propeller and the wings. Some 17,000 square feet of sheet aluminum would cover an air-tight chamber containing 89,500 cubic feet of hydrogen gas. Although the ship would weigh 2,000 pounds, the inventor calculated that its 6230 pounds of lifting power would be sufficient to make it buoyant. When not in flight, an anchor would hold the airship to the ground.

The *Call* concluded its reportage of Dr. Smith's airship on this optimistic note:

Its flight, say the inventors, will be swift and even, like the swoop of an eagle or the steady course of a bird of prey.



## BEST ROUTE TO CALIFORNIA.



R. PORTER & CO., (office, room No. 40 in the Sun Buildings,—entrance 128 Fulton-street, New-York,) are making active progress in the construction of an Aerial Transport, for the express purpose of carrying passengers between New-York and California. This transport will have a capacity to carry from 50 to 100 passengers, at a speed of 60 to 100 miles per hour. It is expected to put this machine in operation about the 1st of April, 1849. It is proposed to carry a limited number of passengers—not exceeding 300—for \$50, including board, and the transport is expected to make a trip to the gold region and back in seven days. The price of passage to California is fixed at \$200, with the exception above mentioned. Upwards of 200 passage tickets at \$50 each have been engaged prior to Feb. 15. Books open for subscribers as above.

It will soar at a height of from one to three miles, and will have a grappling-hook to stay its speed when it becomes necessary to alight as it dives down toward the earth. . . . Its first long flight will be to New York, and the inventors say that forty hours after it spreads its wings over the Golden Gate it will alight under the shadow of the Statue of Liberty.

Of course, Dr. Smith's winged aluminum airship never did alight under the Statue of Liberty. Nor is there evidence that he ever progressed beyond the little model at his Market Street shop. While promising much, Dr. Smith had not mastered the basic principles of aerodynamics.

Several years later, the *San Francisco Examiner* of December 30, 1900, published a forward-looking article by Charles Stanley of San Francisco, who glowingly predicted that:

The twentieth century will open with the airship. . . . The field for their usefulness is large and varied. War will cease to be, and the Nations of the earth will be at peace. The unknown corners of the world will be laid bare, and the dangers and delays of travel by land and by sea will be eliminated, and California will have the honor to be the mother of this great invention.

Of course, the airship that would bring peace to the world existed only in Stanley's vivid imagination, but unlike his predecessors, Stanley grounded his ideas on sound scientific principles. A mechanic and engineer by profession, Stanley had spent years studying wind currents, aerodynamics, and the airships of other aeronauts.

On May 9, 1899, the engineer had incorporated the Stanley Aerial Navigation Company to finance his plans for an airship. A detailed prospectus issued by the company reported, in fact, that "there is nothing theoretical—not the smallest detail—in the construction or navigation of the Stanley airship." Confident in his design, Stanley invited the public to his "shipyard" near the panhandle of Golden Gate Park to inspect his engineering drawings, working model, and the construction of the full-size airship. Impressed by his demonstration, several families invested substantial funds in this latest airborne enterprise.

Stanley's assurances to the contrary, the craft was entirely theoretical. Like Smith before him, he was infatuated with aluminum, and he proposed building a cylindrical-shaped vessel of aluminum. Coned tips

would enable the airship to maneuver against air currents, and bow and stern propellers and rudders would guide the ship and move it forwards and backwards. Planes attached to the sides, he theorized, would provide stability. Propellers affixed to the top of the shell would drive it to the ground when landing. In this way, precious hydrogen gas would not have to be released from the shell's six air-tight compartments. The lower portion would contain engine rooms and compartments for forty passengers and their baggage. When complete, the Stanley airship was to measure 228 feet in length, weigh 13,000 pounds, lift 21,000 pounds, and fly at speeds of seventy miles an hour above storms and against air currents.

To satisfy his stockholders, Stanley planned to make a maiden flight from San Francisco to San Jose. Then the inventor hoped to surprise the world by taking the airship to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis where he would win \$200,000 in prize money. For mysterious reasons, however, the project stopped, and Stanley's dream of world peace and aerial navigation faded with it.

The airships of Marriott, Smith, and Stanley all lacked engines sufficiently powerful to sustain flight against prevailing winds or were simply too heavy to be controllable. Marriott's *Avitor*, for example, could only fly on perfectly calm days and at speeds of five miles per hour. In Europe, however, such brilliant aeronauts as Alberto Santo-Dumont had overcome this problem by utilizing the new lightweight gasoline internal combustion engines. With the advent of the automobile engine, it would be only a matter of time before an American would achieve dirigibility.

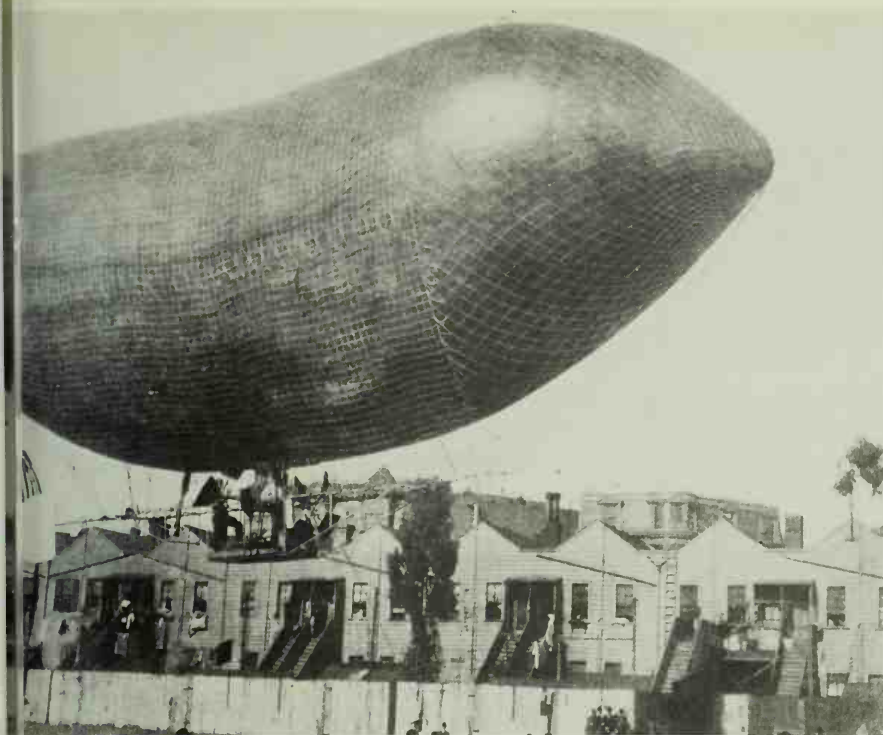
In 1903, the same year that the Wright Brothers made their immortal flight, a San Francisco physician by the name of August Greth finally realized the elusive aeronaut's goal. His accomplishment, however, has been relegated to obscurity. Fortunately, a feature article in the *Scientific American* and a front page story in the San

Francisco *Chronicle* have preserved the details of the doctor's historic flight over the city in the *California Eagle*. Recognizing the importance of that event, the *Chronicle*, on October 19, 1903, proudly proclaimed, "The first trip in Dirigible Balloon on the continent is made in the City of San Francisco." After a half-century of trial and error, an American had developed a successful dirigible.

Dr. Greth's historic flight culminated years of study and experimentation. A native of Alsace, Greth became interested in aviation while in the French army and soon conceived the idea of building his own airship. In 1882, he moved to San Francisco and obtained a degree in medicine. Soon thereafter, Greth resumed his experiments in lighter-than-air flight. In 1897, the physician founded the American Navigation Company and established an aviation works on a vacant lot behind 1517 Market Street. Six years later, Greth produced his first full-size airship, the *California Eagle*.

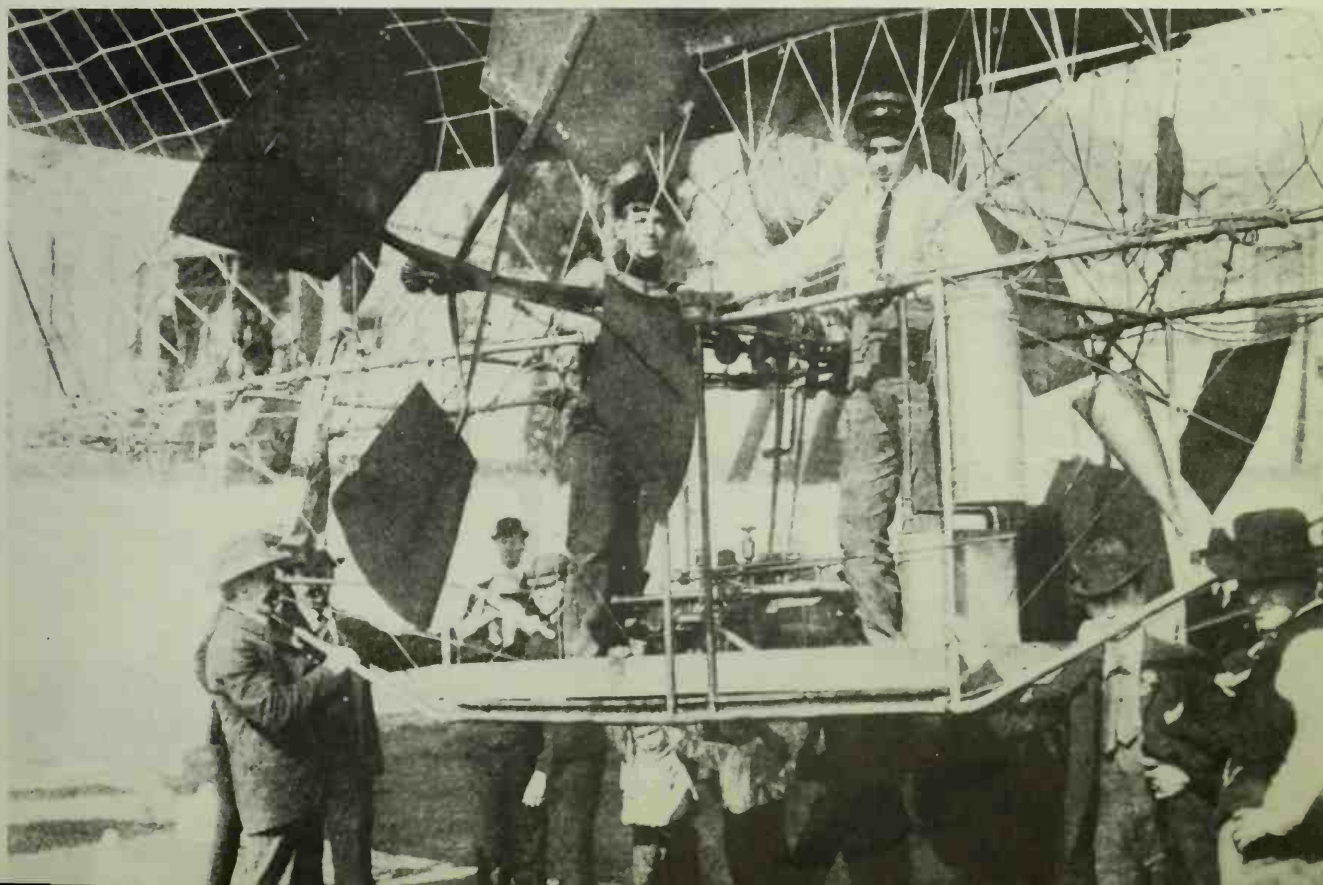
Having once witnessed one of Santo-Dumont's flights and undoubtedly learning from the pioneer aeronaut, Greth designed his airship with great advances over previous experiments. His *California Eagle* measured eighty feet in length, and its balloon cylinder held 50,000 cubic feet of hydrogen gas. In order to keep the balloon envelope rigid, he surrounded it with a sturdy net, below which was suspended a cage for the pilot and a 500-pound, twelve-horsepower automobile engine. The engine drove two propellers that could be moved to turn the vessel in any direction. (The airships of Santo-Dumont and others had had only one propeller, and altitude could be changed only by the pilot himself shifting his weight.) Thus, the Greth airship incorporated several technological advances that made it the most sophisticated of the era.

Once Greth's dirigible was completed in 1903, he made several test flights over Market Street with a strong cable holding the *Eagle* to the ground. His semi-rigid dirigible, he believed, now possessed the capability



*On August 18, 1903, the California Eagle rose above the rooftops of San Francisco to an altitude of 2000 feet. Resembling a giant sausage, the dirigible glided over the city before plunging into San Francisco Bay.*

*This detail of Greth's California Eagle shows the cage that held the engine, the propeller mechanism, and the pilot.*





of successfully maneuvering in unpredictable air currents and flying in turbulent as well as calm weather.

By October 18, the doctor was ready to "cut loose" and fly the airship around the city. Watched by a curious Sunday morning crowd, the *California Eagle* rose from the ground and quickly obtained an altitude of 2,000 feet. According to the *Chronicle*, the craft maneuvered beautifully and turned at will. Astonishing thousands of earth-bound onlookers, this sausage-shaped craft then proceeded to fly over the fashionable homes of the city. Exhilarated and confident, Greth headed west. Then disaster struck. According to the inventor, the fog burned off and caused the dirigible's hydrogen gas to expand, and the airship accordingly began to gain altitude. In a state of panic, Greth opened the gas valve so as to descend and, hopefully, land in Golden Gate Park or the Presidio. His engine stalled, however, and the wind carried him over the Bay and then plunged his craft into the water. Fortunately, the Fort Point life station crew pulled the bewildered acronaut out of the chilly water. This, however, was not the end of his troubles, as the *Chronicle* reported:

The lifting force of the balloon being still sufficient to keep the car off the ground, it required the assistance of a considerable number of soldiers, who had been attracted to the spot, to prevent the vessel from taking a trip upward by itself. . . . B. R. Saxby, Dr. Greth's assistant, opened the throat valve for the purpose of collapsing the balloon, preparatory to removal. This proved the precursor to a series of minor accidents. Saxby was first met by the flood of escaping hydrogen gas, and immediately went "down and out." The assisting soldiers immediately let go the ropes to help Saxby, causing the balloon to start upward, and the next moment one of the soldiers, who had been caught by a dangling rope, was hanging by the leg, head downward, about fifteen feet from the ground. The balloon was quickly captured, however, and the soldier released from his precarious position. Then Dr. Greth took a hand at letting out the gas, and was also overcome. He and Saxby, however, both recovered within a few moments and the chapter of accidents was closed. The airship was finally loaded on a dray and carted back to the shed.

Despite this somewhat ignominious end, the two-hour flight of the *California Eagle* was an aviation milestone. *Jane's Pocket Book of Airships* (1976) lists the Greth dirigible as America's first. During his flight, the doctor had proven the practicability of his twin-propeller steering device and the general navigability of his vessel. The perplexing problem of "navigating the upper strata" where strong currents buffeted the bulky airships, however, remained unsolved.

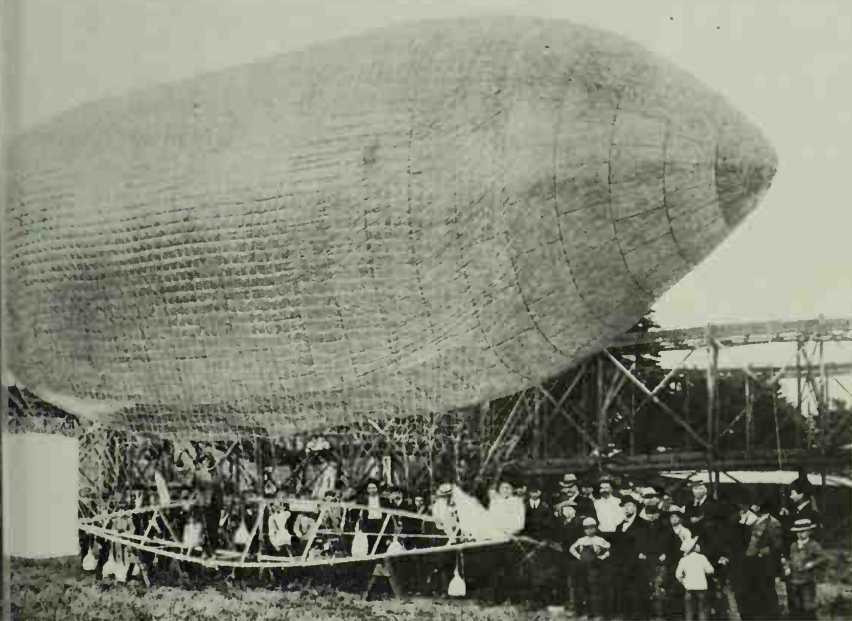
In the annals of aviation, Greth's accomplishment ranks second to that of entertainer-inventor Thomas Scott Baldwin, who is generally credited with building the first successful American dirigible. (Greth's untimely plunge into San Francisco Bay ruined his otherwise momentous flight.)

Baldwin, a native of Missouri, came to San Francisco in 1885 and quickly caused a sensation by walking a tightrope from the balcony of the Cliff House to Seal Rocks and back. With an eye to thrilling crowds and making money, Baldwin became interested in parachutes, for as an amateur balloonist, he sought a way to safely "bail out" when an emergency arose. His experiments led to the perfection of the first vented, collapsible silk parachute.

To prove the reliability of his invention, Baldwin proposed to jump from a balloon over Golden Gate Park; his manager promised to pay this nineteenth-century sky-diver a dollar for every foot he fell. On Sunday morning, January 30, 1887, an anxious crowd of over 10,000 gathered in the park to watch Baldwin's daring stunt. Climbing into a balloon with his parachute and ascending to an altitude of 3000 feet, the pioneer acronaut leaped out of the balloon's basket and gently floated to the earth before an eager crowd—\$3000 richer.



*With Captain Thomas Scott Baldwin at the controls, the California Arrow soared over Oakland. Experiencing total freedom, the aeronaut controlled the airship's altitude simply by running along the catwalk.*



*The California Arrow, surrounded by well-wishers at Idora Park in Oakland, prepared for its maiden flight on July 29, 1904. Baldwin's airship became the first in America to take off and return safely to its starting place.*

With these thrills behind him, the intrepid aeronaut turned to dirigibles. Following with keen interest the flights of Santo-Dumont, Count Zeppelin, and Greth, Baldwin decided that the key to a successful airship was a powerful yet lightweight engine. When he made the acquaintance of a young motorcycle racer by the name of Glenn Hammond Curtiss, Baldwin admired Curtiss' two-cylinder engine and acquired one for his airship. (Curtiss later became one of America's great aviators and airplane builders.)

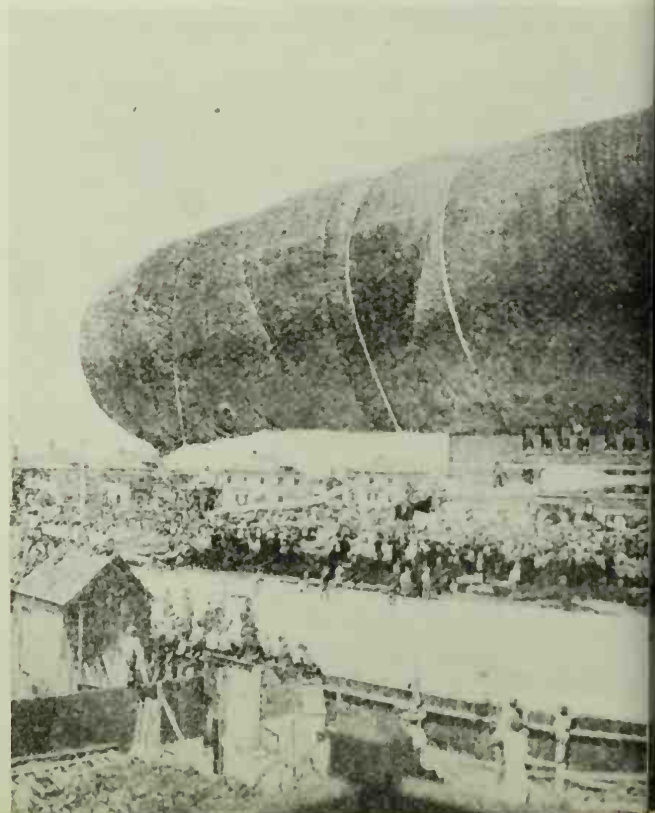
In 1904, Baldwin moved across San Francisco Bay to Idora Park in Oakland where he began building a cigar-shaped airship with several important innovations. Suspended below the 54-foot-long gas balloon was a lightweight aluminum frame that carried the Curtiss motorcycle engine and controls. Because the engine drove a single propeller located at the bow of the frame rather than at the stern, the propeller would pull rather than push the airship and thus give it greater power and maneuverability. Altitude would be changed by simply walking up and down the catwalk of the framework. Significantly, the frame, propeller, and engine of the *California Arrow* weighed only 220 pounds. (Greth's engine alone weighed over 500 pounds.)

Confident in his lightweight design, Baldwin brought the *California Arrow* out of its hangar for its first flight on July 29, 1904. Late in the afternoon, he started the motorcycle engine, and the dirigible lifted off the baseball field of the park. Obtaining an altitude of 500 feet, the aeronaut guided the dirigible over the city and bay, made several turns, and finally returned safely to terra firma and a cheering crowd. Two days later, Baldwin repeated his flight.

Although the flight of the *California Arrow* received little attention in the press, Baldwin had achieved an important American first: he had taken off and landed an airship without mishap. Shortly thereafter, Baldwin left the Bay Area to win several aeronautical prizes at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. Taking the *California*

*Arrow* on tour, Baldwin made demonstration flights across the country and in the Orient, raced automobiles, and attracted such notoriety that the German Imperial Army finally purchased the airship. Baldwin's exploits incidentally attracted to aviation Roy Knabenshue, who built his own airships and became California's most prominent aeronaut, and Lincoln Beechey, who dabbled in lighter-than-air ships and then became America's greatest pioneer stunt pilot.

In May, 1908, the Bay Area again turned out to witness what was believed would be another significant episode in the history of aviation. Inventor John A. Morrell had traveled from Chicago with the hope of building a fleet of transcontinental airships, and after receiving heavy financial backing from a compliant fiancée, Morrell announced completion of his first





*The expansive Morrell proposed building this huge monster that would measure over a quarter-mile in length. The misguided inventor hoped to compete against the railroads by building a fleet of these airships.*

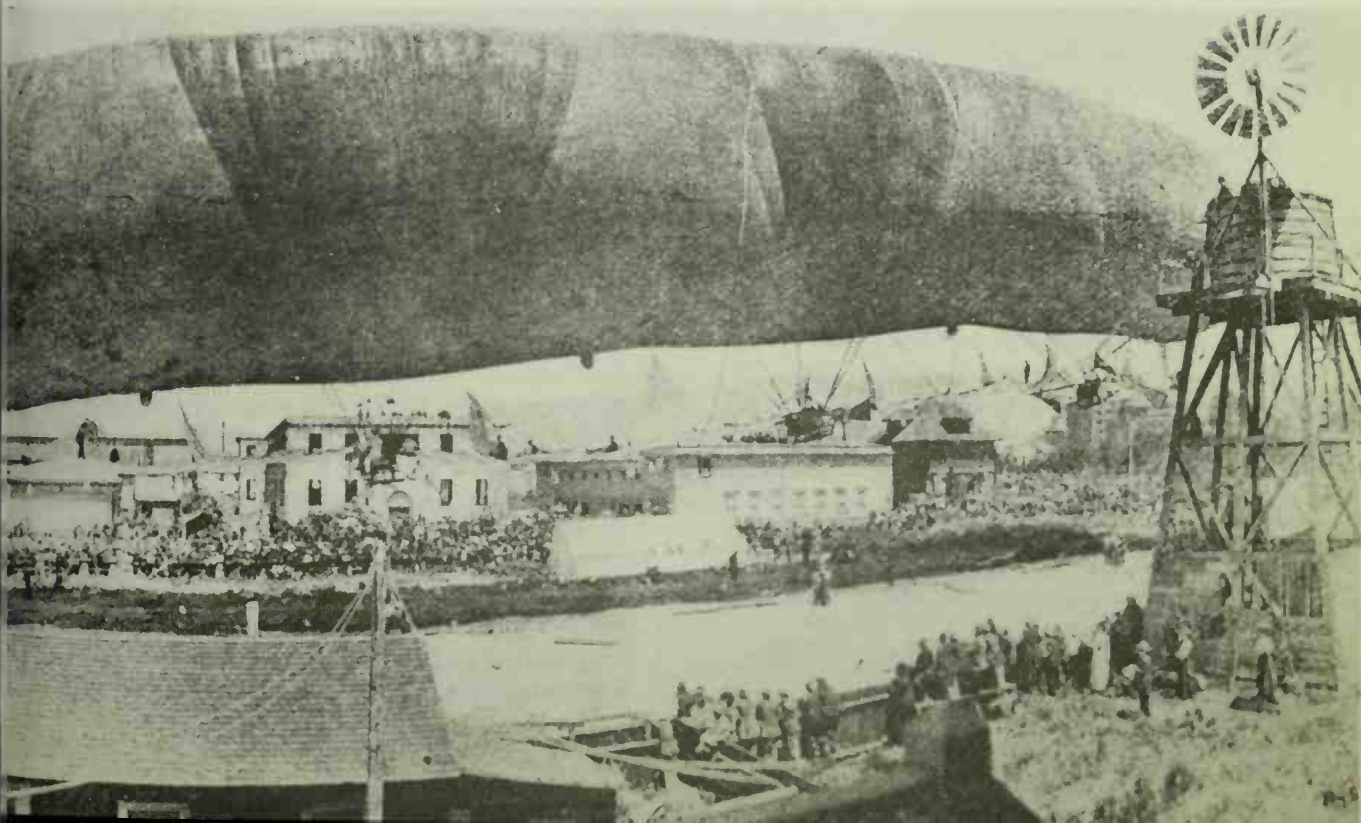
*BELOW: Stretching 485 feet in length, the Morrell airship was the largest lighter-than-air vessel built during the early days of aviation. A huge Berkeley throng turned out to watch its fatal flight on May 23, 1908.*

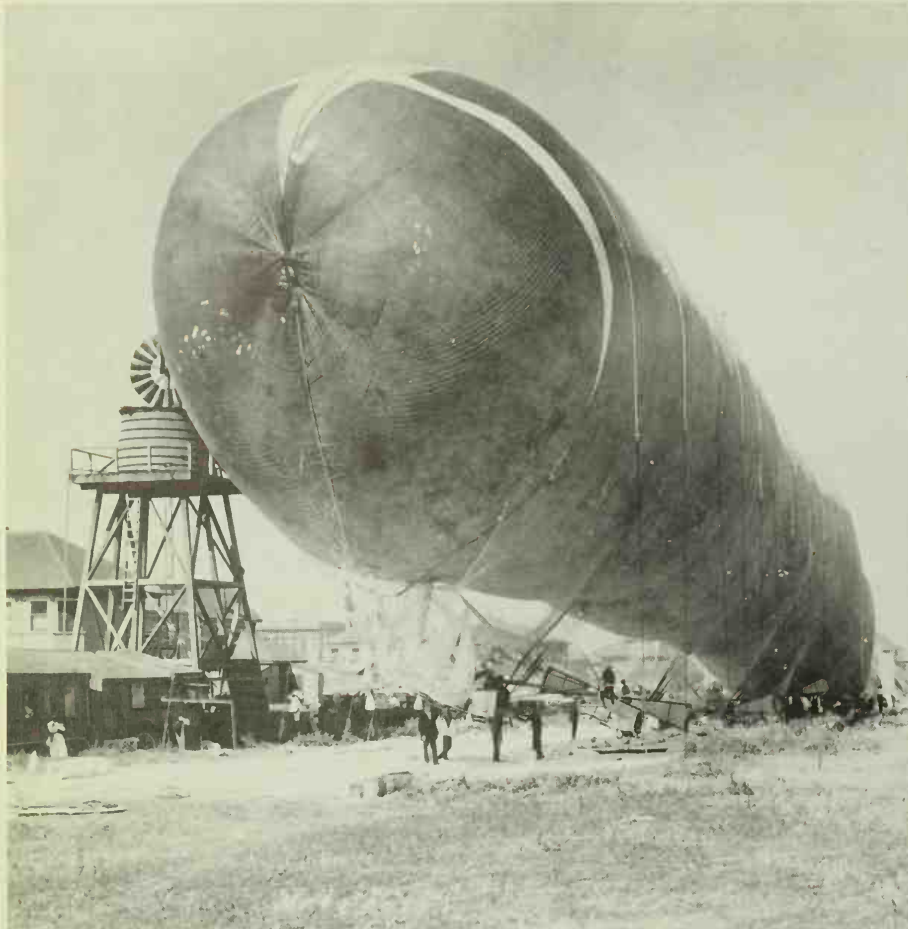
## "ARIEL"



### NATIONAL AIRSHIP COMPANY'S COMMERCIAL AIRSHIP

1250 feet long, 64 feet diameter, 140,000 cubic yards capacity, 128 tons displacement, 8 independent power plants, 3280 actual horse power, 16 propellers  
Ships 40 men in the crew, and will carry 500 passengers and 40 tons of mail from New York to London at an expense of \$875.00 in 24 hours  
(Only as fast as automobiles have traveled.)





*Morrell's airship floated like a giant earthworm over Berkeley before its balloon envelope burst, sending the inventor and crew crashing to the ground. The futility of Morrell's design prompted the following saying: "California has the brightest sunshine, the thickest fogs and the most gigantic frauds of any state in the Union."*

prototype. Before the inventor and his crew could get aboard, however, the airship broke loose from its moorings and drifted helplessly for about twenty miles before crashing near Burlingame. Embarrassed by his runaway dirigible, Morrell then removed himself to Berkeley, where he planned to gain a measure of revenge by building another airship and flying it over San Francisco to upstage the arrival of the Great White Fleet.

Doubtless, Morrell's second airship was one of the most remarkable flying machines ever assembled. Looking like a giant caterpillar, it measured a mammoth 485 feet in length, and its balloon envelope of flimsy muslin held 500,000 cubic feet of illuminating gas. Below this was slung a "mattress" of canvas that held five automobile engines and propellers. The craft had a lifting capacity of ten tons.

Morrell planned to launch this non-rigid airship in secret to surprise San Francisco, but his plans went awry.

On the morning of May 23, 1908, when his crew began to inflate the balloon on a vacant lot near Berkeley High School, neighbors and passersby, and finally a huge crowd, gathered to behold this engineering monstrosity.

At noon, when preparations were completed, the crew climbed aboard—except George Loose, the man Morrell hired to build the airship. Loose and other observing aeronauts warned Morrell that it was consummately unsafe, but Morrell, pressed by his financial backers, refused to heed their warnings.

So to the accompaniment of a wildly cheering crowd, the giant airship rose to an altitude of about 300 feet. Then disaster hit. Suddenly the dirigible became lopsided, and the mammoth gas bag burst, sending engines, propellers, and men hurtling to the ground on top of the horrified crowd. A reporter for the *Call* reported that "a crew of 16 men, three photographers, and an aeronaut attempted the flight, and of those, nine men, in-



cluding the inventor, were picked up unconscious, their limbs broken.”

Morrell’s foolish attempt to surprise San Francisco and silence his detractors ended as a spectacular debacle. Apparently, the ground crew did not release the guy wires in synchrony and the airship rose lopsided. This caused the gas to rush to one end of the balloon with such great pressure that it burst. Although Morrell’s fiancée also blamed the ground crew, newspaper accounts questioned Morrell’s understanding of aerodynamics and labeled the affair “a monumental blunder from start to finish, an erratic endeavor born from ignorance.”

Undaunted by this fiasco, Morrell once more published plans for an even larger airship measuring over a quarter of a mile in length. According to his company prospectus, the *Ariel* would be a rigid airship with 140,000 cubic yards of gas, 128 tons of displacement, and eight engines generating 3280 horsepower. It also would have the capacity to carry 500 passengers and 40 tons of freight. Perhaps fortunately for all concerned, the *Ariel* never became a reality, and Morrell, like his predecessors, faded into obscurity.

After the Morrell disaster, airship building continued only intermittently in the Bay Area. Most people turned their energies and money to heavier-than-air flying machines that were independent of the unpredictable

and dangerous hydrogen gas balloons. The successes of the Wright Brothers and the biplanes of Glenn Curtiss signaled a new era in aeronautics, and by 1910, the airship had been abandoned as too expensive, slow, and unreliable by San Francisco’s influential Pacific Aero Club. In March, 1910, an article in *Sunset Magazine* entitled “Western Men Who Would Fly” summarized: “The balloon is a known quantity—the aeroplane is a fascinating uncertainty—the balloon is an economic failure for air-travel—the aeroplane is a partial success.”

The advent of the airplane, however, did not totally eclipse the accomplishments of Marriott, Greth, Baldwin, and others. Their experiments contributed to the development of the huge airships that became popular in the 1920s and ’30s and the modern blimps that entertain us every New Years Day. In fact, today’s energy shortages and aviation fuel costs have prompted some transportation experts once again to advocate developing new lighter-than-air vehicles to meet future transportation needs.

The illustration on page 345 is courtesy the Society of California Pioneers, as is the drawing on page 334, which is reproduced from the *San Francisco Call*, September 1, 1896. The photograph on page 347 is courtesy the Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino. The illustrations on pages 341, 345 bottom, and 346 are from *Scientific American* magazine and are in the CHS Library with all the other illustrations.





CROSSING THE SIERRAS.  
—  
NORWEGIAN SNOW SKATES.

The recent rapid settlement of that great belt of fertile valleys lying along the eastern base of the Sierra Nevada range of California, has made necessary the extension of mail facilities to that inland world in advance of any provision for that purpose by the agents of the general government. Previous to the winter of 1854-5 the inhabitants of these valleys for three or four months of the year, were closed in by almost inaccessible snow-clad mountains on the west, and on the east by a vast extent of desert country stretching towards Salt Lake, that during the winter months seems peculiarly the

great battle ground of the winds and the storm.

The great depth of the snows upon the Sierras, renders their passage by pack animals not only difficult but dangerous, and often for months together wholly impracticable. To remedy this great inconvenience and secure to the people of the valleys a regular correspondence with California west of the mountains, a proposition was made by Mr. John A. Thompson, a Norwegian by birth, to convey the mails semi-monthly without regard to the depth of the snow. The proposition was accepted and we here present him mounted upon the true Norwegian snow skates, of which, a knowledge of their construction and use he had retained

from the memory of boyhood, having left his native land at the age of ten years.

Entirely unlike the snow shoes of the North American Indian or the people of the Canadas, well adapted as they are to a loose light snow and a level country, the snow skates are peculiarly adapted to the rugged features of our mountains and the damp compact snows that annually accumulate upon them.

The skate consists of a single piece of strong stiff wood, from six to seven and a half feet in length, that turning up in front six or eight inches terminates in a point, six inches in width on the bottom at the bend and gradually tapering backwards to four inches in width. It is flat on the bottom, the top oval or rounded except about a foot in length where the foot rests, a little back of the center; here it is an inch and a half in thickness, from thence tapering to a half an inch or less at either end.

The only fastening is a single strap over the toe of the boot admitting of the freest possible motion to the feet and ancles. In making progress the skate is only raised from the snow when it is desired to make a shorter turn than would otherwise be possible. On uphill or level surfaces the skates are placed parallel to each other and pushed forward alternately with ease about the length of an ordinary step, but the impetus given causes them to slide further than this, while upon descending surfaces they run with great ease and rapidity, and when the declivity is very great, making it necessary to check the motion by throwing the weight of the skater upon a double

handed staff, six feet in length, forced into the snow upon one side as showed in the cut. With these skates Mr. Thompson, heavily laden, travels over the otherwise almost inaccessible snow clad cliffs, and gorges of the Sierras, a distance of from thirty to forty miles a day, thus bearing the sealed tidings, doubtless of hope or disappointment, happiness or grief to many.

It is a feature of our inland transit unique in itself, and as far as it relates to the American Continent, we believe peculiarly Californian.

As showing to some extent the perils and dangers incident to a winter passage of the Sierra Nevada, we subjoin the following interesting account from the *Sac. Union*.

J. A. Thompson, the Expressman of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, called upon us yesterday, upon the completion of his second trip this winter to Carson Valley, and placed us in possession of some highly interesting particulars connected therewith. This trip is peculiarly interesting, from the fact that it was made on his Norwegian snow shoes, seven and a half feet long, over snow which, at some points, he was unable to fathom.

About three miles above Placerville, he came to the snow, having left that place on the 20th of December. He was accompanied by two men who had awaited his going, and at this point they all put on their snow shoes. The weather was clear, but cold, and the party made Lake Valley without any incident worthy of note.

On the night of the 23d December, they reached a deserted cabin in that valley, and struck a fire. Mr. Thompson being anxious to press on, told his companions that he would go ahead and stay over night at another cabin about a mile ahead, and that they could overtake him in the morning. At

though anxious to stop, rather than separate from him, they determined to go on that night, and once more they all started off. About midnight, they reached the cabin and found everything dark and the door closed. Mr. Thompson, not expecting to find any one in, however, knocked and "halloed," when, to his surprise, a voice answered from within. On entering, Mr. Thompson found a man lying alone upon the floor in that dreary spot, without other covering than the clothes he wore, and the boots frozen to his feet.

In this deplorable condition, he had been lying for twelve days, with nothing to sustain life but raw flour. His feet were completely frozen, and will both have to be amputated below the knee. His sufferings must, according to the statement of Mr. Thompson, have been indescribable, and yet he bore them with the fortitude of a martyr, and scarcely permitted a murmur to escape him. Although death would soon have terminated his agony, he still had a lingering hope that Providence might direct Mr. Thompson by his cabin, and thus save him. Had not Mr. T. gone on that night, he would probably have passed the cabin in the morning without stopping.

The sufferer proved to be James Sisson, the partner of Mr. Hawley, about six miles above Placerville. He had been engaged in the packing business, and left for Carson Valley on snow shoes some two weeks previous. The storm overtook him on his way, and his feet becoming frozen, it was with great difficulty he reached his cabin or trading post. On arriving there he found his matches so wet that he could not strike a light, and thus he remained for four days, when he discovered a box of matches in his cabin which furnished him a fire. He then attempted to cut his boots off his feet, but could not succeed; and nothing remained for him but to await either succor or death.

On the 24th, Mr. Thompson started

for Carson Valley, and on Christmas day got five men to agree to accompany him back to Lake Valley. He rigged them out with snow shoes, made after the pattern of his own, and taking with them a sled upon which to haul the sufferer, they started back on the 26th. They reached the trading post that night, and laid over during the 27th, in consequence of the severe weather—another snow being falling. On the 28th, they packed Mr. Sisson on the sled, and thus, with great labor, succeeded in conveying him safely to Carson Valley, where the sufferer is now lying in the care of Dr. Dagget. Mr. Thompson, on his return will take with him some chloroform which will be administered to the patient and his feet amputated, as it was not deemed advisable to attempt the operation without this agency.

In Carson Valley, Mr. Thompson fell in with Col. Wm. Rogers, who had gone over from Hope Valley, and from him he learned that one of his copper miners, named Benj. Fenwick, formerly from Virginia, had been frozen to death on the 15th of December. The deceased had gone to Carson Valley, and was returning home, when the cold overpowered him, at a distance of three hundred yards from Col. Rogers' house. He seated himself upon the snow, with his body in an upright position, and thus perished. Five days after, a dog which had accompanied him approached the house, emaciated and starved. The occupants of the house, following the track of the dog, which faithful animal also followed them back, found the body of Fenwick as described. From the indications, it was manifest the dog had not left the body of his master during that time, but had crouched upon his lap, until driven away by starvation or a higher instinct. That the devoted animal should have escaped freezing is somewhat remarkable.

Mr. Thompson left Carson Valley on Monday, January 5th, and arrived in this city yesterday morning, the 9th.

At Big Canon, the snow was four feet deep; at Hope Valley, five feet; at Luthers' Pass, six feet; at Lake Valley, five feet; and in the pass on Johnson's Summit, he sounded a depth of ten feet without reaching bottom. He estimates the depth of snow for eight miles this side of Slippery Ford at twelve feet.

### "STRIKE THE HARP GENTLY."

BY CALVIN B. McDONALD.

[Every Californian who has listened to the sweet musical strains of the lamented Mrs. Robb, will read the following beautiful sentiment from the pen of C. B. McDonald, formerly of the *Sierra Citizen*, with feelings of sorrowful regret, that one so fair and gifted, should be prematurely hushed in the deep stillness of the tomb, or be called from their care easing mission in our mountain land, to the spirit choir above.—Ed.]

We have received a message, dictated by the late MIRIAM GOODENOW Robb a little while before the gates of Paradise were lifted up, at the coming of one of the fairest and purest of those whom God created only a little lower than the angels. Her request was, that Gen. Allen and the writer of this would not forget that she had lived—that they would collect and send to her little daughter, all their articles written about herself; that when ELLA shall have learned to read, she may honor the name of her lost mother, and be taught to believe that, after all, this world is not so very dreary; because, in the far-off sunset land, among the nodding firs and bleak and silent crags of California, many a stout heart, calloused with the curse of gold, welled up like a fountain in the desert, when the sweet voice of her mother bade the bearded miner "strike the harp gently."

Strange it is that when the Angel of Death is sent to earth, to execute the

decree of "dust to dust," that the young and beautiful perish, while the old and the deformed, and the heavy laden are left to toil on with their weary burdens. But, 'tis even so; the archer sends his shaft at the soaring eagle, and spares the partridge cowering under the hedge; and when the lightning crowns the mountain brow with fire, the ignobler trees escape its vengeance, but the lofty pine, that lifts its head heavenward, and nods to its Creator, is blasted, and its branches withered, leaving only the riven trunk, swaying to and fro, writing on the overhanging dome, in characters unread by mortal eye, "Thy will be done." When the "demons" down under the sea, come up and war among the waves, the worthless hulk is washed ashore, but the noble ship, that bears the proudest pennant of the world, goes down, full of life and majesty.

And when the flower girl goes forth to gather the first born of the spring time, the lily, bending with the purest distillations of night, is gathered first.

Rest thee, sweet singer! Rest thee beneath the green prairies of Illinois; and every evening, when the chaste sunlight draws its last magic circle around thy sleeping place, "strike the harp gently."

And the little Ella! In after years, when the glow of womanhood shall have mantled her cheek; when the stranger's kiss, pressed on her infant brow, shall have grown cold and been forgotten; when the chaste summer wind sweeps up from Lake Michigan, and plays among the branches of the locust and the willow, in God's Acre; when

"The young lambs are playing in the meadows,  
The young birds are chirping in the nest;  
The young fawns are playing with the shade  
ows,  
And the young flowers are blowing toward the west,"

let ELLA, kneeling by the honored grave of Genius, whisper softly to the overwatching angel, "Mother, strike the harp gently."

# THE ECONOMIST AS HUMANIST

## – the career of Paul S. Taylor –

Sitting in his modest, cluttered campus office with his door ajar to welcome the steady stream of visitors, Professor Paul S. Taylor handles the multitude of details which demand his attention. At eighty-four years of age, although retired from the University of California at Berkeley and suffering health problems, Taylor works six hours a day, five days a week. Alert, warm, and eloquent, he lights up at a humorous anecdote; his laconic wit remains as dry as a breeze off the San Joaquin Valley.

Since 1943 Taylor has been in the center of the movement to preserve national land and water policy in the West. Long before it became fashionable, he studied minorities and delved into the dramatic, often bloody history of farm labor in California. His advanced students include a former secretary of labor, a former president of the university system, several legislators, hundreds of teachers, and an estimated 20,000 students who took his classes during his forty-year career at the university. His pervasive influence is evidenced in the scores of Ph.D. and M.A. theses which bear his signature as a reader or supervisor. His thirty-year marriage to photographer Dorothea Lange produced not only a partnership which lasted until Lange's death in 1965,

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Richard Steven Street won the 1978 James D. Phelan award for his account of the emergence of California agriculture. He is presently completing a history of California farm workers between 1769 and 1979—a work based on over 500 manuscript collections ranging from the Mission Archives and the papers of Cesar Chavez to material in the Bank of America Archives and declassified F.B.I. files. He lives in his home town, San Anselmo, and writes for *Pacific Sun*.

but also a brilliant collaborative record of the 1930s, *An American Exodus*.

Taylor's professionalism, however, has never diverted him from his primary concern—the quality of human life. Trained as an economist, he broke through the artificial barriers separating history from economics and synthesized the two in his own investigations. A pioneer in the field of oral history, he developed interviewing techniques and a methodology long before the approach became an accepted form of historical enquiry. He also diligently collected historical information, and the small mountain of material which he has deposited in the Bancroft Library testifies not only to his ongoing research but also to his deep commitment to preserving information for future generations.

Born in Sioux City, Iowa, in 1895, Paul Taylor was raised by loving parents of English-German-Swiss lineage. In 1913 he entered the University of Wisconsin, at Madison, an experience which he later recalled “gave the bent to my whole life.” Madison offered a stimulating intellectual environment, and Taylor was strongly attracted to the school's controversial and challenging economists—Richard T. Ely, E. A. Ross, and John R. Commons. Finding these men appealingly broad-minded rather than narrowly academic and drawn to their view of economics as a flexible field of study embracing history, law, sociology, and political science, Taylor was particularly impressed by their belief that knowledge could be a tool for solving contemporary social problems. Studying with these men, Taylor found economics to be a lively discipline rather than the pro-



*Teaching labor economics at the University of California, Taylor combined teaching and research with extensive field work.*

verbial "dismal science." Above all he was stimulated by concepts identified with Commons and his associates: that political, historical, and social circumstances determine economic reality, that the economist must reject arbitrary academic disciplines and work from real conditions rather than theorizing from books, that facts so discovered suggest courses of action, and that ethical decisions are the essence of the discipline.<sup>1</sup>

In 1917 Taylor left the University of Wisconsin with a degree in labor economics. He had become a confirmed advocate of the John R. Commons critique of the classical school of labor economics, especially its deductive method, its pretensions to final truth, and its belief in the abstract "economic man." But Taylor's education had only just begun.

On the basis of a single military science course consisting of a weekly close-order drill, Taylor obtained a commission in the Marine Corps. On February 4, 1918, he arrived in France. Several months later he found himself a lieutenant and a platoon leader in the trenches of Verdun. Soon thereafter, he was caught in a gas barrage at Belleau Wood where his lungs were severely damaged.

Returning to the United States to recover, Taylor spoke with the economist E. A. Ross about his future career. Ross counseled him against becoming a lawyer and helped him obtain a modest scholarship in economics from Columbia University. A family friend and physician, however, advised Taylor that his lungs could not stand the rigors of a winter in New York City, and accordingly, the young veteran faced about and headed west to the University of California at Berkeley for a year of recuperation and graduate study.

At Berkeley, Taylor found much more than he had expected. While the salubrious California climate slowly restored his health, Taylor discovered that the university, although still considered an academic backwater, had become an exciting crossroads of ideas. Students gathered there from around the world—many of them,



like Taylor, older, war-toughened, bright, mature. The infant Economics Department boasted several outstanding teachers, including Stuart Daggett, who was pioneering in his studies of the Southern Pacific Railway, and Ira B. Cross, a Commons student who had initiated important work on the early California labor movement. Taylor also worked closely with the university's two preeminent historians, Herbert E. Bolton and Herbert Priestley. Soon Taylor abandoned his plan to study at Columbia University. Working with Solomon Blum, the chairman of the Economics Department, Taylor wrote his doctoral dissertation in 1922 on the west coast seaman's union. After Blum died in 1926, Taylor, who had been teaching his mentor's classes during his long illness, was asked to continue teaching as an instructor in the Economics Department.<sup>2</sup>

Teaching absorbed most of Taylor's energies during his first years. But then he began thinking about research and writing. Interested in exploring California farm labor problems in the same way that Commons had explored trade unions and collective bargaining, Taylor began seeking sources of financial support. During a faculty dinner honoring Edith Abbott of the University of Chicago School of Welfare, Taylor got his big break. Carl Plehn, chairman of Chicago's Economics Department, slipped Taylor a card reading "See me after dinner." Later Plehn introduced him to Abbott, who was then director of the Social Science Research Council's Committee on Human Migration. Abbott was looking for someone to study Mexican immigration to the United States, a phenomenon reaching flood-tide proportions, and she asked if Taylor would undertake such a study. Taylor answered instantly, "Yes!" Within a few weeks he was off on a six-month leave from his teaching duties. Little did he realize in January 1927, that he was embarking on a life-long venture.<sup>3</sup>

Taylor quickly discovered that research on Mexican immigration could not be gathered in any library because the little existing data was extremely biased. Therefore, he decided to talk to the immigrants themselves. Asking people "Where are the Mexicans?" he was told that they picked grapes around Napa. When he arrived there, however, it was February, the wrong season.

Next, Taylor drove into the Central Valley. Armed with notebooks and a Kodak camera, he crisscrossed the dusty backroads until he found some Mexican "Colonias" around Madera and Merced. After some preliminary notetaking, he continued south until he reached the Imperial Valley. There he visited pool halls, movie houses, schools, barber shops, labor agencies, counseling offices, labor camps, and cafes. It was not easy work. Taylor recalls: "You walk up to somebody

whom you've never seen, you don't know who he is, you don't know what his background is—all that you can see is his face and clothing and where he is. You walk up to him and what do you say?" Taylor discovered that the best approach was to begin with questions about crops, or weather, or directions. After a friendly response, he would move to questions about wages and the background of the people he was interviewing. When people asked why Taylor was so curious, he would say simply that he was a school teacher. Slowly pulling out his notebook, Taylor would then ask, "Do you mind if I put this down? I have trouble remembering." Invariably his interviewees would reply, "Oh, no, no. Go ahead." What Taylor could not record in notes, he would log as soon as possible, frequently pulling his 1924 Dodge off the road under a shady tree to reconstruct the interview. Returning to Berkeley after months in the field, he dictated his notes for transcription by Elizabeth Priestley, daughter of Professor Priestley.

Taylor worked on this project from 1927 to 1930. Besides the Imperial Valley, Los Angeles, and Orange County, he concentrated on five other areas where Mexican labor was important: the valley of the South Platte in Colorado; Dimmit and Nueces counties in Texas; the Calumet region of Indiana and Illinois; and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. In addition, he solicited immense amounts of data from hundreds of people and institutions scattered across the United States.<sup>4</sup>

Unsatisfied with his statistics on Mexican patterns within California, Taylor nevertheless felt that he would have to attempt a rough quantitative assessment. Aware that most Mexican migrants passed through the Tehachapi Mountains following the ripening crops north or returning home for the winter, he arranged with the Standard Oil Company to have its service station attendant at Gorman, high in the Tehachapis, tabulate the number of Mexican farm workers chugging up over the ridge in their old flivvers. Thus he obtained a rough

idea of the directions and quantitative dimensions of the migration.

Another problem confronting the young researcher was his formal academic training. Neither French nor German—the two languages required for the doctoral degree—proved helpful in interviewing Mexican farm workers. At first he circumvented the problem by using an interpreter. Subsequently, he solved the problem by auditing undergraduate Spanish classes and studying with a tutor.<sup>5</sup>

As Taylor immersed himself in the Spanish language and Mexican culture, he began to realize that the Commons approach to labor economics was limited in its ability to comprehend farm labor problems because of its preoccupation with trade unionism and its ethnocentric assumptions. In delving into the Mexican-American sub-culture, particularly its tension with the dominant Anglo culture, Taylor realized, for instance, that farmworkers demonstrated different attitudes toward basic pursuits such as work and that a concept such as the Protestant Ethic was culture-bound.

Interviewing people of every social and economic class on a wide range of questions, Taylor sought out village Indians, urban Mexicans, illegals, young children, businessmen, and old people. Out of this data, he carved thirteen monographs in the series *Mexican Labor in the United States*. All but one were published by the University of California. The first, *Imperial Valley*, appeared in 1928. The last, *Nueces County, Texas*, was issued in 1934 by the University of North Carolina Press. Two monographs, "Women in Los Angeles Industries" and "Orange County, California," remain in manuscript form along with hundreds of Taylor's interviews, field notes, scholarly papers, newspaper clippings, photographs and ephemeral material in the Bancroft Library.<sup>6</sup>

The *Mexican Labor* monographs firmly established Taylor's reputation as a scholar. In contrast to most writing about Mexicans in this period, Taylor's series

was sensitive, probing, and well-researched, matched only by the work of Manuel Gamio, a contemporary Mexican anthropologist. All thirteen of Taylor's volumes have been reprinted.

"El Enganchado"  
("The Hooked One")

*I came under contract from Morelia  
To earn dollars was my dream.  
I bought shoes and I bought a hat  
And even put on trousers.  
For they told me that here the dollars  
Were scattered about in heaps  
That there were girls and theaters  
And that here everything was fun.  
And so I'm overwhelmed—  
I am a shoemaker by trade  
But here they say I'm a camel  
And good only for pick and shovel.  
What good is it to know my trade  
If there are manufacturers by the score  
And while I make two little shoes  
They turn out more than a million.  
Many Mexicans don't care to speak  
The language their mothers taught them  
And go about saying they are Spanish  
And denying their country's flag. . . .  
My kids speak perfect English  
And have no use for our Spanish.  
They call me "fadder" and don't work  
And are crazy about the Charleston.  
I am tired of all this nonsense  
I'm going back to Michoacan . . . .*

Song from interview by Paul Taylor, in  
*Mexican Labor in the United States:  
Chicago and the Calumet Region*  
(Berkeley, 1932).



When Taylor returned to full-time teaching at Berkeley in 1930, he was inundated by requests for information, advice, and consultation. Expertise and public involvement, however, did not earn Taylor more money. During his long absences from the university, Taylor had been repeatedly denied salary advancement, and some faculty members hinted that Taylor would be wise to follow more traditional research lines. Taylor bore the financial consequences stoically, however, setting a record for serving nine years without advancement as an associate professor in the Economics Department at Berkeley.<sup>7</sup>

As Taylor resumed his teaching duties in the early thirties, he saw the nation plunge into the greatest economic depression in its history, one he knew would hit the unskilled harvest workers of the great Central Valley particularly hard. In October, 1933, after nearly 8,000 migrant workers went on strike in the southern San Joaquin Valley, the California Department of Industrial Relations requested that Taylor investigate the violent strike in the cotton fields and compile a history of the event. His efforts produced a model documentary history and a landmark in the story of California's farm laborers.

Taylor introduced the study with these thoughts:

As the faulting of the earth exposes its strata and reveals its structure, so a social disturbance throws into bold relief the structure of society, the attitudes, reactions, and interests of its groups. . . . It exhibits in full detail the essential characteristics of numerous lesser conflicts in California agriculture, both before and since, in which ardent organizers agitate and lead, incensed "vigilantes" organize and act, growers, officials and laborers each overstep the law, and citizens finally cry to the state authorities for peace, if necessary at the hands of troops.<sup>8</sup>

In the pages which followed, he edited verbatim statements from every available source and reconstructed the entire story of the strike, demonstrating how the event was like a prism which refracted virtually everything that was happening in rural California at that time. Sub-

sequently printed by the LaFollette Civil Liberties Committee, the document did much to dispel unfounded accusations that the strike was solely the result of communist agitation, as many newspapers had reported. Rather, Taylor showed that the strike was the natural outgrowth of the legitimate grievances of desperate people who ran headlong into equally desperate and unbudging farmers.<sup>9</sup>

The following year Taylor was offered a job as field research director for the Rural Rehabilitation Division of the California State Relief Administration. Believing that this agency's work offered a possible solution to problems created by the depression, Taylor accepted the position unhesitatingly. "In carrying out this new research assignment to design a government program," he recalls, "I found I must also take a step beyond what I had taken previously when studying Mexican migrants under traditional academic auspices. I wanted to produce reports that would bring action as well as information." To accomplish this, Taylor assembled a modest staff, hired a photographer whose position was concealed on the payroll as a typist, and moved into the countryside.

Most appalling, Taylor and his staff determined, were the migrants' living conditions. Laborers were forced to live in camps where homes were built of strips of tarpaper, gunny sacks, corrugated iron, cement sacks, and fruit packing crates. Describing this situation to the State Relief Administration in late 1935, Taylor called on the federal government to "accord minimum deficiencies to the workers and access to health and other public agencies." Soon thereafter the Relief Administration allocated its first \$200,000 to initiate a program of federal housing for rural migrants, with the first camp dedicated on October 5, 1935, at Marysville. Eventually the Farm Security Administration, which administered the program, constructed a dozen other camps throughout the United States.<sup>10</sup> Paul Taylor may be considered the father of this camp program, which exemplifies the major thrust of his career during the 1930s—his linking



*In 1939, Taylor presented his data about the movements of migrant workers to Senators Robert M. LaFollette of Wisconsin (left) and Elbert D. Thomas of Utah (right) of the subcommittee meeting in San Francisco to investigate industrialized farming.*

of social science with public policy. Not surprisingly, this creative synthesis continued to lead him in new and fruitful directions.<sup>11</sup>

Late in 1934, while attending a photo exhibit at Willard Van Dyke's studio in Oakland, Taylor met the young photographer Dorothea Lange. Married since 1920 to the painter Maynard Dixon, she had begun her career as a portrait photographer but moved in the 1930s into documentary work. One of her first "street" photographs, "White-Angel Breadline, San Francisco, 1932," portrayed an unshaven man leaning on a railing, hands clenched around a tin cup, with his back turned to a line of people waiting for food. After viewing this powerful image, Taylor asked to use Lange's work to illustrate his own writing. In September, 1934, he selected her photograph of a radical orator as the frontispiece for an article on the San Francisco General Strike.

Early in 1935, the two began collaborating on the study for the California State Relief Administration which produced the migrant camp program. As they worked together they discovered each other's keen intellect, refined temperament, didactic moral sense, and liberal political views. They appreciated, too, that neither could separate their personal values from their work and that their work showed the need for strong action, much as a medical diagnosis was followed by treatment.

Taylor and Lange began to consider marriage—in the romantic sense and in the sense of integrating their careers in social science and photography. Both divorced late in 1935, and on December 6, 1935, they were married in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Shortly thereafter they rented a house in Berkeley, where Dorothea installed her darkroom.<sup>12</sup>

Taylor and Lange made more than a traditional marriage,<sup>13</sup> and in 1939 they demonstrated their pathbreaking kind of teamwork. Responding to the migration of hundreds of thousands of America's dispossessed, they recorded the hegira in words and pictures in *An American Exodus*. Published by a small press, *An American Exodus* received little national attention, but like everything else the pair did, it became a classic work of art and history, a collector's delight, and a photographic landmark.<sup>14</sup>

As he worked with Dorothea and with both the Relief Administration and the university, Taylor also became deeply involved in the LaFollette Civil Liberties Committee's probe of industrial agriculture in California. In January, 1938, he overwhelmed the committee by presenting the results of his years of field work, particularly with his information that over 150 strikes had been waged in rural California since 1930. Coming at the moment in the committee's work when Senator

Hiram Johnson had squeezed off funds for this investigation and when local sheriffs and growers had accordingly refused to turn over subpoenaed evidence and ignored summonses to preliminary hearings, Taylor's studies, statistics, graphs, and visual data gave the committee enough information to initiate its probe. At the same time, the publication of John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* and Carey McWilliam's *Factories in the Field* created further pressure for an investigation. As a result, the committee obtained funds to open hearings in December, 1939, in a packed San Francisco courtroom.

Amid red-baiting accusations, Paul Taylor took the witness stand and showed how the amount of farm labor strife in California was far out of proportion to that occurring in other rural areas. In vivid language he told how "Okies" had been "burned-out, plowed-out, tractored-out." Then he asked the crucial question: "Can a large farm labor class be reconciled with democracy?" Pointing out how farm workers "bear increasingly the mark of a class as chances of ascending the agricultural ladder, or of finding outlets into industry, grow more difficult," he described the destruction of small-scale family farming and the growth of finance agriculture, the relationship between large-scale farming and undemocratic principles and traditions, and the close alliance between urban and rural anti-labor employer associations. To rectify these problems, he called for workman's compensation, old-age insurance, social security, a minimum wage, and protection of the farm worker's right to organize—privileges already accorded other workers.

The shock of being subpoenaed and being forced to answer questions from the likes of Paul Taylor angered many growers, rural leaders, and sheriffs, who fought the committee bitterly. But for eight days the LaFollette Committee uncovered tales of riots, tear gas bombings, shootings, beatings, arrests, and murders. From the testimony of 395 witnesses, as well as 1747 exhibits and

5875 miscellaneous pieces of information, the committee then published an exhaustive dissection of California agriculture, particularly the efforts of the Associated Farmers Inc. to crush farmworker's organizations and the mounting abuses of civil liberties in rural areas during the 1930s. The result of this examination, the historian Irving Bernstein observed, was "like lifting the lid of a garbage pail."<sup>15</sup>

The LaFollette Committee hearings and the events of the 1930s unsettled Paul Taylor's life. Fifteen years of research, writing, thinking, observing, and teaching had led him to agree substantially with Henry George's assertion that California agriculture contained "the same tendencies to concentration which the power loom and the trip hammer had developed in manufacturing." Farming was becoming more expensive, complex, and exclusive; the land, supposedly a haven for the poor and disinherited, seemed to be becoming the property of the rich and of the corporations—the "big guys," Taylor would often say. Like Jeffersonians before him, Taylor saw the nation's democratic potential and tradition declining with the end of the small family farm.

Convinced that these anti-democratic tendencies grew out of the nation's pattern of land use, especially its inequitable distribution, Taylor set forth his ideas in two famous essays published in *Rural Sociology*. Documenting that in 1860, some 37 percent of California's farm population was composed of nomadic harvesters, whereas by 1929 nearly 60 percent made its living picking crops, Taylor demonstrated how the growth of commercial fruit and vegetable farming had generated a "semi-industrialized rural proletariat."<sup>16</sup>

For Taylor, the plight of the rural poor and the undemocratic tendencies of commercial agriculture were



more than academic interests. The social effects of corporate agriculture, he believed, could not be justified by principles of law, business, efficiency, or productivity, and his career from 1940 to the present has been shaped by these concerns.<sup>17</sup>

In his research, Taylor has focused particularly on the Reclamation Act of 1902, a law written to benefit landless poor people and to further small-scale family farming, but which has had an opposite effect because it has seldom been enforced. Delving into the history of the law, Taylor discovered that the Reclamation Service was set up to be responsible for building dams and canals in seventeen western states and that the land "reclaimed" by water from these projects was restricted to 160 acres per person. Since 1912, however, Taylor believes, the Interior Department has been a puppet for large landed interests supposedly excluded temporarily from the benefits of the law. Moreover, on the eve of World War I, department administrators set aside the requirement that farmers live on the reclaimed land. As a result, big farm operators were able to grab even more cheap public water, and in 1926, when these same big operators forced the Interior Department to drop the residency and acreage requirements entirely, absentee landowners were able to develop large farms on land intended for small-scale family farming.<sup>18</sup>

In many essays published in a wide variety of journals and periodicals, Taylor has thought and rethought these ideas, putting them in popular forms and telling them to countless audiences as diverse as university faculties and members of the Commonwealth Club. Presenting his ideas clearly and forcefully, Taylor always boils down the issues to this simple choice: Are the few or the many to benefit, the people for whom the law was intended or those the law had clearly excluded?<sup>19</sup>

Taylor's lonely fight has often kept him at odds with the University of California. Indeed, during Taylor's tenure, he has watched the institution train agricultural

engineers, build harvest machines, invent superior hybrid plants, systemize farming operations, and create an entrenched echelon of people who function to nullify his work. Yet at the same time the university has valued and protected Taylor as a scholar apart, allowing him to educate and conduct research on and off campus.<sup>20</sup>

As a member of the Economics Department at Berkeley, Paul Taylor continually fought the compartmentalization of faculty and disciplines by advising graduate candidates in history, sociology, political science, and anthropology, as well as economics. Chairman of the Economics Department from 1952 to 1956, he helped guide the newly created Institute of Industrial Relations. In addition, Taylor served as advisor to the Interior Department, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Social Security Board, and the President's Commission on Migratory Labor.

As a teacher, Taylor has always been concerned for and committed to his students. He combines criticism with praise to insure quality work and inspire his students to ongoing excellence. Through students who went on to distinguished careers in government and the universities, Taylor has exercised considerable influence. Clark Kerr, whom Taylor took to the 1933 cotton picker's strike, became president of the University of California. Referring to Kerr's last stormy years, Taylor reflected that perhaps his former student had learned some important lessons through his involvement in that strike. Another of Taylor's doctoral students, F. Ray Marshall, is today's secretary of labor.<sup>21</sup>

Since his retirement from active teaching in 1962, Taylor has carried on his work as emeritus professor. He has traveled to Viet Nam, Colombia, Egypt, and other developing nations that request his advice on questions of land tenure and economic policy. He continues to train and counsel graduate students, economists, historians, and students of farm labor, water law, and rural sociology.

Though an economist dealing in numbers, statistics,



*Taylor addressed the National Land for the People Symposium held in his honor in 1976.*

and ratios, Paul Taylor is a writer, not a quantifier. He likes words and uses vivid images. His ability to write colorful, clear, anecdotal, judicious, and eloquent analytical prose sets his work off from all other economists.

In his "Nonstatistical Notes from the Field," written in 1942 for *Land Policy Review*, he described his own approach. Challenging his colleagues with the statement that he was "not interested in averages but in people," Taylor explained, "By the time you statisticians know the numbers, what I'm trying to tell you in advance will be history, and you'll be too late."<sup>22</sup>

Steadfastly refusing to compromise himself by limiting his writing to "hard" facts and ever expanding his analyses across the traditional disciplines, Taylor has always published his material in the form in which it

was written. A typical passage dealing with the perambulatory life of harvest workers, written in 1951 for the President's Commission on Migratory Labor, reads as follows:

Their cohesion is scarcely greater than that of pebbles on a seashore. Each harvest collects and re-groups them, yet they remain loose aggregations of individuals and families held together during a short span of the calendar by no ties stronger than the proximity of the sources of work and pay. They live under a common condition, but create no techniques for meeting common problems. They wander about seeking livelihood but unlike nomadic tribes, they have no hereditary culture to sustain them.<sup>23</sup>

Paul Taylor's eighty-four years, his two dozen books, his boxes of papers in the Bancroft Library, his many students, his hundreds of articles, his eloquent prose,

and his influence through others evidence his significance as a thinker, as a scholar, and as a social mover. Absorbing the ideas of his Wisconsin teachers, he transplanted them to a western setting, nurtured them, and watched them germinate and grow.

Today, his work bears fruit. The cause of farm workers now seems assured, and the acreage and residency requirements of the Reclamation Act of 1902, although under heavy attack, are being taken seriously. Choosing his words with care, like a farmer about to harvest a fine crop, he told Lynn Ludlow of the San Francisco *Examiner* in November, 1976, "It's markedly different today. We have a new generation of youngsters. They come and knock at my door. For many years . . . nobody ever did."<sup>25</sup>

The LaFollette photograph is courtesy the San Francisco History Room, San Francisco Public Library; the photograph of Taylor teaching is from the Bancroft Library, University of California. The author photographed Taylor at the 1976 symposium.

## Notes

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3. "Taylor: Social Scientist," I:98; Interviews with Taylor, May 23, June 15, 1975.
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6. Paul S. Taylor, *Mexican Labor in the United States: Imperial Valley, California* (Berkeley, 1928); . . . *Valley of the South Platte, Colorado* (Berkeley, 1929); . . . *Migration Statistics* (Berkeley, 1929); . . . *Racial School Statistics, California, 1927* (Berkeley, 1929); . . . *Dimmit County, Winter Garden District, South Texas* (Berkeley, 1930); . . . *Bethlehem, Penn.* (Berkeley, 1931); *Chicago and the Calumet Region* (Berkeley, 1932); . . . *Migration Statistics, II* (Berkeley, 1933); . . . *Migration Statistics, IV* (Berkeley, 1934); . . . *An American Mexican Frontier: Nueces County, Texas* (Chapel Hill, 1934); "Taylor: Social Scientist," I:107. Manuel Gamio's notes and interviews are at The Bancroft Library. For Gamio's contributions, see Robert Redfield, "The Antecedents of Mexican Immigration to the United States," *American Journal of Sociology*, XXXV (November, 1929): 433-438; and Gamio, "The Influence of Migrations in Mexican Life," Taylor Collection of Notes and Interviews.
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  13. Dorothea Lange's career was unimpeded by marriage to Taylor. Obtaining a job as a documentary photographer with the historical division of the Farm Security Administration, she set about documenting California farm laborers in the same way Mathew Brady documented the Civil War and Lewis Hine documented child labor in textile mills—with power and honesty. Lange's most famous photograph, "Migrant Mother," taken in a muddy pea field on March 9, 1936, is discussed in Lange, "The Assignment I'll Never Forget," *American West*, VII (May, 1970): 46; see also Taylor, "Migrant Mother," *ibid.*, pp. 41-45; Lange Field Notes, March 8-10, 1936; February 16, 1937, Lange Collection; Lange to Stryker, February 16, 1937, Russell Lee Correspondence, University of Louisville Photo Archives; Berkeley Daily Gazette, October 13, 1965; Taylor, "Social Scientist," I:111-113.
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  24. Lynn Ludlow, *San Francisco Examiner*, November 28, 1976; *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, December 3, 1976; December 5, 1976; Taylor, "California Farm Labor: A Review," *Agricultural History*, XXXXII (January, 1968): 49-53; Taylor, "Hand Laborers in the Western Sugar Beet Industry," *ibid.*, XXXXI (January, 1967): 19-26.
- Although Lynn Ludlow's work has only been cited at the end of this article, the author has drawn heavily on his interviews with Taylor as well as on his reporting on western water law.

## Defending the Bill of Rights— The ACLU Archives at CHS

### REVIEWS

Charles Wollenberg, *Reviews Editor*

Now open to researchers at CHS is the first record group of the extensive archives of the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California. Representing one of the richest unexplored collections of modern California history, the entire archive covers such controversial and provocative issues as the San Francisco general strike of 1934, Bird Man of Alcatraz, the Eureka Mill riots of 1935, the Santa Rosa Tar and Feather Vigilance Committee, IWW activities in the Imperial Valley, McCarthyism, loyalty oaths, and the Berkeley Free Speech Movement. This collection of ACLU scrapbooks, ephemera, correspondence, and organizational and legal records will doubtless provide important insights for future books, articles, and theses.

Established on a permanent basis in the midst of the 1934 general strike, the Northern California affiliate of the ACLU traces its origins to the founding of the national office in December, 1915. At that time, concerned individuals of liberal political persuasion convened in Washington, D.C., to form the American Union Against Militarism and proposed to defend the civil rights of conscientious objectors and to fight for the repeal of the conscription law.<sup>1</sup> Committed to protecting "the rights of free speech, free press, free assembly, and liberty of conscience,"<sup>2</sup> especially in wartime, the group established a Civil Liberties Bureau in July, 1917. According to the *New York Times*, the bureau's chief purpose was "to give legal aid and advice through attorneys and committees of citizens in all parts of the United States to persons whose rights are invaded under pressure of war."<sup>3</sup> By 1920, the bureau had evolved into an autonomous organization named the American Civil Liberties Union. In these early years, under the directorship of Roger Baldwin, the ACLU worked with such sympathetic lawyers as Clarence Darrow, Arthur Gar-

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field Hays, and William Jennings Bryan to defend the rights of radicals, conscientious objectors jailed for disloyalty, and other individuals who were prevented from organizing, speaking, or distributing literature. The ACLU also brought test cases to court, including the famous Scopes Trial about the teaching of evolution in public schools.

By the early 1920s, a number of large cities including Los Angeles had established local committees (later called affiliates) which worked in conjunction with the national office in New York. Many postwar ACLU cases involved the defense of people charged with violating the wartime Criminal Syndicalism law which made illegal "the advocacy of violent methods of political or industrial change."<sup>4</sup> By 1926, sixty-nine out of the nation's seventy-five statutory convictions under this law had occurred in California,<sup>5</sup> and the job of defending accused individuals fell heavily on the already overextended Los Angeles office.

Accordingly, ACLU Director Roger Baldwin traveled to California in July, 1926, to help establish an ACLU committee in San Francisco. A second committee in the Bay Area, he reasoned, was necessary to provide assistance to the Southern California committee, as well as to enable the ACLU to lobby more effectively in Sacramento for the repeal of the Criminal Syndicalism law which the group viewed as patently unconstitutional.

Despite the resolute efforts of Bay Area attorney Austin Lewis and Baldwin, who agreed to help support a temporary Northern California ACLU committee, financial difficulties compelled a suspension of the Northern California operations in the fall of 1927. The groundwork had been laid, however, and some seven years later, the same year that the Los Angeles committee celebrated its fifteenth anniversary, the Northern California committee was resurrected.

In July, 1934, San Francisco had been the scene of the "most widespread general strike in U.S. history."<sup>6</sup> The

strike of the International Longshoreman's Association, soon joined by other unions, was followed in August by an outburst of vigilante terrorism against supposed sympathizers. These attacks were conveniently ignored by the police, and ACLU members Chester S. Williams and Ernest Besig were transferred from their assignments in Los Angeles to San Francisco to defend the vigilante victims.

By September, Chester Williams, who was succeeded by Dr. George Hedley, again launched efforts to raise money to support an ACLU committee in the Bay Area. Operating on a shoestring out of Austin Lewis' law office, the Northern California committee again gained a new director in 1936. This time, however, the individual stayed for thirty-eight years. His name was Ernest Besig, a member from Southern California who had skillfully defended the rights of nine strikers in the Eureka Mills strike of 1935.

Besig was a foresighted individual who recognized the historical significance of the street handouts, pamphlets, newspapers, flyers and miscellaneous literature produced by both the left and the right out of the turbulence of the thirties, forties, and fifties. During his tenure, he determinedly collected three volumes of bound, indexed, and numbered ephemeral material. Volume 1 contains information on aliens, their rights and freedoms, and the treatment they were afforded in the United States. Volume 2 contains pamphlets on general civil liberties issues, the constitution, and the rights of Native Americans. Volume 3 is filled with important material relating to labor unions. Included are various issues of the *Waterfront Worker*, the mimeographed longshoremen's weekly published during the general strike, and another rare bulletin issued by the striking bargemen entitled *Steamboat Round the Bend*. As well, the collection includes a multitude of fascinating pro-labor pamphlets and throwaway flyers with such colorful titles as *Hell on the Front*, *The Maritime Crisis—What it Is and What it Isn't*, and *Buy a Ship and Make*

**Maritime Mirror**  
"Reflecting the Opinions of the Rank and File"

BY UNION LABOR

**UNIONS FORCE 15 DAY DOCK TRUCE**

The Fight That Opens the Way!



**MOVE NOW TO GET LASTING PEACE TERMS**

Maritime union men must back to work before the 15th day of October or face the possibility of a strike.

Standing firm until the 15th day of October and the 15th day of October, the union leaders called the bluff of the shipowners and won a 15-day truce, with strings attached.

Just yesterday the 15th day of the strike against the "hunger" plan of the employers, which came out of the 15th day of October, was the 15th day of October in Washington.

C. B. Harrison, Chairman, Washington, D. C.

The will acknowledge your two weeks of today requesting us to agree to an extension of present contracts and awards until November 15th, 1936. The group representing the most unionized for the shipowners are willing to agree to an extension of present contracts and awards for a period of 15 days to put present union sentiment that back of the union as of before the 15th day of October agree with your contention and with us this day and all thereafter that shall not be settled by arbitration until the 15th day of October.

**Full Workers Gain Members in Drive**

Members of the Maritime Union, the P. M. U., and the Maritime Union will continue the general movement of unionization in the maritime industry.

**WRITE TO US**

A letter of correspondence to the Maritime Union and the P. M. U. can be sent to the Maritime Union, 1500 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

**Kidwell to Leave Early for Florida**

Representative of the California Maritime Union, Kidwell, will leave for Florida to attend the annual convention of the Maritime Union of America, which will be held in the city of Miami, Florida, on the 15th day of October.

**ALLIANCE FOR THE 15th**

The Maritime Union, the P. M. U., and the Maritime Union will continue the general movement of unionization in the maritime industry.

*Berkeley Gazette*  
**APRIL 20 to 25**  
**IS**  
**FINGERPRINT WEEK**

This week has been set aside to complete the job of fingerprinting every man, woman and child in the City of Berkeley.

**DO YOUR SHARE**  
**Register Your Prints!**

Be so careful of your identity as you are in your buying. Labels and trade marks are the identification marks of standard merchandise.

Your fingerprints are the trade mark, the physiological label of your identity.

As the merchandise value is guaranteed by its trade mark so is the integrity of your identity guaranteed by your fingerprints. Neither has value or meaning if both remain registered.

Register your prints and protect yourself and your family against fraud or substitution.

**Berkeley Leads the Nation In Voluntary Fingerprinting... Let's Hold That Lead!**

The Maritime Mirror, an anti-communist rank-and-file paper first published in 1936, is one of many workers' and employers' newsletters preserved in the ACLU archives.

A remarkable fingerprinting effort in Berkeley and loitering laws forbidding three or more individuals from meeting in the streets after 8 p.m. are among the events of 1936 noted in the archives' clipping file.

Your Fortune. An equal representation of material published by shipowners opposing the union strikes is also included. Exemplary titles of the latter include *Communists of the Waterfront Doomed*, *Coast Committee for the Shipowners*, and *Moscow Bridges Falling Down* (a satirical indictment of Harry Bridges and his supposed links with Moscow).

Besig applied the same assiduous care to collecting newspaper articles as he did to collecting ephemera material. In all, he amassed a total of forty large scrapbooks, all indexed, from the years 1936 to 1940. Three volumes deal solely with Harry Bridges and the fight to prevent his deportation to Australia. The remainder focus on civil liberty issues and cases involving immigration, free speech, security clearance denials, loyalty oaths, discrimination, and vigilante activity. Extensive material is also available on leading anti-Communists such as Martin Dies, the Tom Mooney case and the San Francisco Emergency Relief Administration, and on the efforts to rid the UC Berkeley campus of so-called "Reds" beginning in 1936 with Dr. Max Radin and continuing into the 1960s.

By 1936, Besig had also established a monthly news-

paper for the growing membership called *ACLU News*. A rare complete run of this paper, along with annual reports published from 1945 to 1966, provide excellent documentation of the activities and involvement of the ACLU of Northern California.

Cumulatively, the material in this first record group represents less than a tenth of the half-million items in the ACLU archives at CHS. The bulk of the collection, mainly non-printed records of great interest, will be made available to researchers as it is catalogued and processed.

## Notes

1. Robert L. Knutson, *The American Civil Liberties Union in Northern California*, M.A. Thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1950.
2. *New York Times*, July 3, 1917, p. 5.
3. Ibid.
4. *A Strike is Criminal Syndicalism—in California*, pamphlet published by the ACLU, New York City, March, 1931.
5. Knutson, *ACLU*, p. 13.
6. Paul S. Taylor and Norman Leon Gold, "San Francisco and the General Strike," *Survey Graphic*, XXIII (September, 1934): 405-10.

## Book Reviews

### *Mexican Workers in the United States: Historical and Political Perspectives.*

Edited by George C. Kiser and Martha Woody Kiser.  
(Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1979.  
295 pp. Paper \$7.50.)

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*Reviewed by Matt S. Meier, History Department, University of Santa Clara, and author, with Feliciano Rivera, of The Chicanos: A History of Mexican Americans (1972), co-author of A Bibliography for Chicano History (1972), co-author of Dictionary of Mexican American History (Greenwood Press, 1980), and co-editor of Readings of La Raza: The Twentieth Century (1974).*

This collection of readings about Mexican workers in the United States is divided into six sections. The first three are chronological: World War I Era, Repatriation during the Great Depression, and The Second Bracero Era (1942-1964). The last three are topical: Illegal Mexican Workers, Mexican Commuters, and Mexico's Border Industrialization Program. Each of the six sections begins with a brief historical overview of the period or topic to follow and a brief introduction to the articles within it. Inevitably the thirty-four selections vary in the degree to which they illuminate the economic and political impact of Mexican workers in the United States, but altogether they fulfill the editors' objective of making "some of the more useful but less accessible literature readily available." The long-term problem of undocumented workers, to which nearly a third of the book is devoted, receives heavy emphasis.

Perhaps the most important contribution of the book is the inclusion of considerable material on the Mexican view, both official and journalistic, primary and secondary. Much of this has been previously accessible only to a handful of interested scholars. These Mexican source materials also aptly illustrate the changes, and sometimes the contradictions, in Mexican attitudes toward the export of her workers to the United States.

A serious weakness of the collection is the failure to include information on the heavy migration of workers in the 1920s, other than brief scattered references. Also missing is any direct reference to the Box Bill in the 1920s—an important part of the effort to include Mexico in the quota system established by new immigration legislation and a serious absence in a book whose title includes the term

"Political Perspectives." A discussion of the speed-up in migration to the United States between 1890 and 1914 would have helped the uninitiated to understand the patterns after the era described by the editors.

These selections, then, present various issues concerning Mexican workers in the United States from a variety of viewpoints, official and unofficial, pro and con. The reader must make his own judgment on the validity of the opposing viewpoints presented, and in the process he can obtain a better understanding of the important contemporary issue of Mexican migration to the United States and its impact on our economy, polity, and society.

The Selected Bibliography at the end of the volume is a valuable guide to periodical and monograph materials dealing with the topic of the immigrant Mexican worker, as are the notes to the six section introductions by the editors. A statistical table on immigration during the period covered might have been a valuable addition to the book.

### *The California Water Atlas.*

Edited by William L. Kahrl. (Sacramento: State of California, 1979. 118 pp. \$37.50.)

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*Reviewed by Charles Wollenberg, Reviews Editor of this magazine and research consultant for three television documentaries on California water policies.*

"Small is beautiful" must no longer be the operating principle of Governor Jerry Brown's administration. *The California Water Atlas*, produced by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research in cooperation with the Department of Water Resources, is a very big and beautiful book. It is also well-written, spectacularly illustrated, and filled with useful information for expert and layman alike.

The atlas was prepared by a small army of public officials, scholars, and other experts assembled by editor William Kahrl and an advisory committee chaired by Stewart Brand. Although the text is the product of many hands, the separate contributions have been substantially edited to give the prose a unified and, with few exceptions, readable style.

Kahrl himself is an historian, and he chose four skilled practitioners of the craft—Norris Hundley, Robert Kelley, Lawrence Lee, and Elmo Richardson—to work on the



*Imported water flows through a new irrigation ditch, as a proud onlooker perhaps daydreams of future crops.*



historical sections. As a result, these chapters are the best in the book and together comprise the finest short history of the state's water use and development in print. The atlas also includes good discussions of California's water resources, the management of the water system for competing agricultural, urban, conservation and recreational purposes, the implications of water law and water pricing practices, and the tough problems of ground water management and water quality standards.

The book's most dramatic element is visual. It contains hundreds of beautiful maps, charts, an excellent collection of historical and contemporary photographs, and stunning satellite pictures of the state supplied by NASA's Ames Laboratory. If there is any criticism to be made, it is that the book is almost too big and too beautiful. The 16 x 18-inch size makes the volume difficult to handle, and in some of the charts, simple clarity seems to have been sacrificed for visual beauty.

For all its opulence, however, the atlas is basically a serious,

scholarly work which Californians can well use to help make some very hard policy choices for the future. In the past, cheap, often subsidized water has been a major cause of much of the state's massive growth. This is particularly true of growth in agriculture, our biggest business and consumer of 85% of our water. The authors correctly note that today the "halcyon days when ample new water supplies were available at low development costs are gone forever. . . ." California's basic water problem is how to respond to this fact. Do we meet future needs primarily through expensive new dams, reservoirs, and canals, or through difficult and sometimes equally expensive conservation and reclamation efforts? The answer will do much to determine the state's economic and social reality in the twenty-first century.

*The California Water Atlas* will be an indispensable sourcebook for decades to come. Even at \$37.50, it is a tremendous bargain, a public service in the best sense of the term.

*Lost Harbor: The Controversy over Drake's California Anchorage.*

By Warren L. Hanna. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979. 476 pp. \$15.95.)

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*Reviewed by Robert H. Power, CHS Trustee and the leading proponent of a Drake landing site in San Francisco Bay.*

More than half of the 394 pages in Warren Hanna's *Lost Harbor: The Controversy over Drake's California Anchorage* are allocated to a critical analysis of what Hanna identifies as a "landmark debate." The original debate was organized in 1974 by J. S. Holliday, former director of the California Historical Society, and Marilyn Ziebarth, editor of the *California Historical Quarterly*, as a way to present with equality the controversy concerning Drake's California anchorage through the very words of its chief debaters—Raymond Aker, V. Aubrey Neasham, and this reviewer. The publication of the Hanna book, therefore, catapults the Drake Debate issue of the *Quarterly* (Fall, 1974) into prominence as an example of a unique inquiry into a complex historical controversy.

Warren Hanna, an attorney, applies what the dust jacket of his book describes as "keen judicial analysis" to the unraveling of the 400-year-old Drake "conundrum." Although he purports to write from an "objective" or "non-partisan" point of view and although he articulately holds that "there is still no solution to the Drake anchorage riddle," Hanna is naturally no more objective, non-partisan, or disinterested in furthering his non-committed point of view than a Drake scholar who holds for a specific landing site.

Author Hanna has collected books about Drake in California for over fifty years, but this long association with the subject may have caused some of the internal weaknesses in the text. For instance, Chapter 10, "Contemporary Maps and Charts," has ninety-eight footnotes, none of whose dated citations were published after 1937. While this Rip Van Winkle approach to scholarship gives the chapter a learned appearance, in fact it makes it obsolete by a decade or more. Similarly, the essay following the heading "The Silver Map of the World" goes to great length to suggest the date, place of issue, and maker of this exquisite map in silver, but Hanna fails on all three points because he apparently was not familiar with his own bibliographical entry, "Kraus, Hans P., Sir Francis Drake, Amsterdam 1970,"

in which a photograph of a signed issue establishes the silver map's date as 1589, the place as London, and the maker as Michael Mercator.

Hanna dismisses the Portus Novae Albionis plan as valueless evidence because proponents of eleven different anchorage sites have used "the Portus as a part of the evidentiary support for their claims." Using the same argument, he would have concluded that Cinderella's ugly sisters must have worn out the shoe before the prince was able to fit it onto Cinderella's foot.

Since the *Quarterly's* debate, this reviewer presented a paper entitled "A Study of Two Historic Maps" to a California Historical Society members' meeting and made obsolete the earlier parts of the CHS Drake debate concerning the Portus Novae Albionis plan. Although the paper is included in Hanna's bibliography, Hanna fails to bring this new concept in cartographic knowledge into the text itself, leaving the reader ignorant on this and significant new computer studies concerning the Portus Plan.

Hanna likewise fails to report accurately another post-debate development—the discovery of the 1567 English silver sixpence at Rancho Olompali which he inaccurately reports as not "discovered under circumstances entitling it to be considered as archeologically authenticated." This find was a carefully documented discovery by the archeologist Charles Slaymaker, who had a carbon-14 test made on a redwood post fragment to confirm and refine the age of the coin's discovery horizon.

For its many shortcomings, *Lost Harbor* is the only hard-cover book in over a quarter of a century to draw materials on Drake's California landfall into one volume and offer an index, table of contents, bibliography, pictorial material, reprints of the critical documents, and a review of the Drake Debate issue of the *Quarterly*. In the end Hanna opts for a search for more clues which he hints may be found "on Marin County beaches or somewhere in the British archives."

Perhaps if Hanna had better understood such issues as Elizabethan cartography, had not been put off by the challenge to the Plate of Brass by the Bancroft Library, had given fair consideration to the sixpence found at Rancho Olompali, and had better understood the flora and fauna of California, he might well have titled his book *Lost Harbor Found* and been as prejudiced for a specific landing site as any of the other Drake debaters.

*Hard Rock Epic: Western Miners and the Industrial Revolution, 1860-1910.*

By Mark Wyman. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979. x, 331 pp. \$15.95.)

*Reviewed by R. E. Lingenfelter, Research Physicist at University of California, San Diego, and author of several books on western American history.*

The hard rock miners in the American West faced both geographical and technological frontiers. Their struggles on the physical frontier have been widely told, but their struggles on the industrial frontier are less well known. In *Hard Rock Epic*, Mark Wyman gives us a broad panorama of the hardships confronted by the miners in the technological and economic transformation of mining in the West between 1860 and 1910. With a wealth of examples, Wyman studies the impact of industrialization and absentee ownership on the miners' way of life and their responses in the mines, in the union halls, and in the legislatures.

Chapters focusing on the problems of regular pay, mine safety, and accident liability provide new insight into these questions. Wyman clearly demonstrates that the hazards and deprivations of the industrial frontier could be much

more taxing on both body and spirit than any in the natural frontier. Lawsuits and illegal seizures provided occasional remedy for miners left nearly destitute when companies defaulted on back pay, but for the unfortunate miner who came to be injured in the increasingly dangerous operations, compensation was rare indeed. Some company managers thought it better business to fight liability suits all the way to the US Supreme Court, if necessary, rather than pay even a pittance in compensation, for fear of establishing a dangerous precedent.

Other chapters on unionization, political action, and radicalism also contribute to our understanding of the hard rock miners' response, although these aspects of western industrial relations have already received much more attention. One complaint this reviewer would make with these sections is that the strong commitment of the early miners' unions to industrial unionism rather than trade unionism—a commitment that laid the foundation of western mining labor philosophy—is not brought out here. Another complaint is that the chapter on Who Will Work seems to blur rather than to delineate the complex racial, ethnic, and religious tensions among the miners. Chinese employment in the mines is treated rather superficially, and the problems of Mexican miners in California, Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico are not addressed at all. The small errors



*Hard rock miners break their grueling routines to pose for an adventurous photographer. The candle trails hint at the necessarily long underground exposure.*



which creep into all works, such as the misplacement of two prominent Nevada camps, Eureka and Unionville, in California, are more a source of amusement than complaint.

These criticisms do not detract from the fact that *Hard Rock Epic* makes a solid and much needed contribution to the history of both the western mining frontier and the industrial revolution.

### *Gertrude Atherton.*

By Charlotte S. McClure. (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1979. 163 pp. \$9.95.)

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*Reviewed by Carolyn Forrey, Associate Professor of American Studies at Empire State College, State University of New York.*

Charlotte McClure's introduction to the life and work of one of California's most prolific and popular novelists presents Atherton as a social historian of her times, a view that was also held by Atherton and many of her critics. Atherton's work does indeed provide a fascinating study in American social history, and her portrayals of San Francisco society in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are particularly valuable. But it is necessary to recognize both the strengths and weaknesses of Atherton's social vision as interpreter of her times. McClure, in choosing to present Atherton's life and work primarily in Atherton's own terms, fails to present a framework for understanding Atherton's vision in social and historical perspective.

The major strength of McClure's study is her treatment of Atherton's work as fiction. Her analysis of Atherton's characterization, plot structure, and narrative style is well done. She devotes the bulk of her literary study to discussion of Atherton's California heroines and their struggles to build meaningful lives in the face of restrictive social norms for women. McClure's work here, particularly her chapter on *Black Oxen*, follows closely the lines of my own analysis in "Gertrude Atherton and The New Woman" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1971), which she did not acknowledge.

Atherton's many novels depicting women's attempts to break away from the social, emotional, and imaginative bonds of narrowly restrictive feminine roles, can well be appreciated as insightful social history, for it is here that

Atherton achieved her greatest psychological depth, keenest social perceptions, and broadest social sympathies. In discussing other aspects of Atherton's fiction as social history, however, McClure needs to apply a more careful historical analysis. Her discussion of Atherton's concern for the poor, Atherton's belief in democracy, and Atherton's portrayal of characters of various social backgrounds and classes needs to be qualified by acknowledgment of Atherton's firm identification with aristocratic values and perspectives, the disdain of her aristocratic heroes and heroines toward "the lower orders," and the fear and hatred of "undesirable races" which surfaces constantly and bluntly in her fiction. Atherton's portrayals of working class and even middle class characters are stereotypes; they offer little insight into working class experiences in Atherton's time, though they reveal much about the attitudes of Atherton's own social class at the turn of the century.

McClure's study provides a useful introduction to Atherton's work as fiction, though she does not attempt to evaluate it in context of American literary history. Her brief survey of critical response to Atherton's work does not develop any substantive critical ideas, and her own summary is inconclusive. While McClure's book is less successful in placing Atherton's work in social and historical perspective, it may well stimulate the interests of social historians in one of California's most colorful and contradictory writers.

The photographs are from the CHS Library.

## In Memoriam

The kind of living KATHARINE BIXBY HOTCHKIS packed between her birth and death is not easily described in words. If she herself were writing this remembrance, she would "stick to the facts," then laugh and add, "But never let facts stand in the way of a good story." In her case, facts alone make a good enough story.

She was born June 16, 1899, in Long Beach, California, in an adobe house built in 1806 on a ranch that had once been part of a Spanish land grant. Her paternal grandfather, John Bixby, who migrated from Maine in 1871, acquired a portion of this Rancho Los Alamitos and bequeathed it to his son, Fred Hathaway Bixby. Fred and his wife Florence brought up their five children there. Katharine, the eldest, learned early how to rope and herd cattle. She remembered going on her first roundup at age seven, being tutored on the ranch with her sisters and brothers, attending boarding school in Piedmont, and graduating from Vassar in 1921 after spending her junior year at the University of California at Berkeley.

Diaries which she kept following her graduation reveal seeds of the interests which would engage her the rest of her life: devotion to family, community involvement, love and respect for the land. In 1923 she married Preston Hotchkis of Los Angeles, and they began to realize a goal she had voiced since childhood, "a happy marriage and four children." Four offspring and ten grandchildren helped them celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary six years ago.

She lived eighty years and to the end maintained her intense interest in the world around her. She served long terms as trustee and director on the boards of Pitzer College, Westridge School, Southern California Symphony Association, KCET Channel 28, Los Angeles Psychiatric Services, Pasadena Visiting Nurses Association, and Bixby Ranch Company. A persevering fundraiser, she swelled the resources of the Community Chest, Red Cross, Los Angeles Music Center, and many other civic projects. Her concern for the quality of life in a crowded world led her to join a small group of women who established the first birth control clinic in Pasadena in the early 1930s.

In recent years when she turned her attention to what she called "living history," she brought her insight and candor to the Board of Trustees of the California Historical Society. Loyally and effectively supporting the Society, she endorsed programs which reached out to a statewide audience and established the Katharine Bixby Hotchkis Inviolable Endowment Fund, whose income supports CHS activities. Initiating



the restoration of the Old Mill in San Marino, the historic adobe building which now houses the Southern California headquarters of the Society, she received the Garden Club of America's Conservation Award in 1972.

Recognizing the keenness of her memory of the past, the Society published two charming illustrated volumes of her recollections, *Christmas Eve at Rancho Los Alamitos* (1971) and *Trip With Father* (1971, reprinted in 1979). The latter account tells of a horseback excursion made in 1916 with her father and two sisters from San Francisco to their ranch in Long Beach.

Mrs. Hotchkis died on October 10, 1979, after long illnesses. She was surrounded by her family in the house which she and her husband built and lived in for fifty years. Her warmth, ebullience, and generous spirit will always be remembered.

The California Historical Society is receiving contributions in memory of Katharine Bixby Hotchkis.

# California Check List

By Gary Kurutz

The California Check List provides notice of publication of books, pamphlets, and monographs pertaining to the history of California. Readers knowing of recent (1978-79) publications which need additional publicity are requested to send the following bibliographic information to the compiler of this list: Author, title, location and name of publisher, date of publication, number of pages, price, and address where item can be purchased if not carried at general bookstores.

Adams, Ramon F. *More burs under the saddle. Books and histories of the West.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979. 189 pp. \$14.95.

*Atlas of California.* Culver City: Pacific Book Center, Inc., 1979. 200 pp. Publisher, 9555 Washington Blvd., Culver City, 90230. \$47.50.

Bagert, Johann Jakob. *Observations in Lower California* (reprint). Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979. 238 pp. \$15.75.

Bal, Peggy. *Pebbles in the stream. A history of Beale Air Force Base and neighboring areas.* Chico: Easter Publishing Company, 1979. 113 pp.

Bartlett, Lee (ed.). *Benchmark and blaze: The emergence of William Everson.* Metuche, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1979. 274 pp. \$12.50.

*The Berkeley cookbook. A collection of choice and tested recipes by the ladies of Berkeley, California* (facsimile 1884 ed.). Berkeley: Creative Arts Book Company, 1979. 150 pp. Publisher, 833 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, 94710. \$4.95.

Brant, Michelle. *Timeless walks in San Francisco* (rev. ed.). Berkeley: Bookpeople, 1979. 70 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 68, Point Richmond, 94807. \$3.50.

Bohakel, Charles A. *The historic Delta country—The bayou of the West: A guidebook to State Highway 160.* Antioch: by author, 1979. Author, P.O. Box 817, Antioch, 94509. \$3.00.

Bullock, Paul, & Jerry Voorhis. *The idealist as politician.* New York: Vantage Press,

1978. 364 pp. Publisher, 516 West 34th Street, New York, N.Y. 10001. \$10.95.

Bullough, William A. *The blind boss and his city. Christopher Augustine Buckley and nineteenth century San Francisco.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979. 336 pp. \$17.50.

Camo, William, D. A. Carpenter, and Bill Hotchkiss. *William Everson: Poet from the San Joaquin.* Newcastle: The Blue Oak Press, 1979. 105 pp. Capra Press, P.O. Box 2068, Santa Barbara, 93120. \$5.00.

Center for California Public Affairs. *California Museum Directory.* Claremont: by author, 1979. 75 pp. \$15.00.

———. *U. S. Government Offices in California: A directory.* Claremont: by author, 1979. 114 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 10, Claremont, 91711. \$15.00.

Chase, John. *The sidewalk companion to Santa Cruz architecture* (rev. ed.). Santa Cruz: Paper Vision Press, 1979. 375 pp. Publisher, 1111 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, 95060. \$9.95.

Comstock, David and Ardis. *Index to history of Nevada County by Thompson and West.* Grass Valley: Comstock Bonanza Press, 1979. 85 pp. Publisher, Route 2, Box 1724-C, Grass Valley, 95495. \$12.50.

De Nevi, Don and Thomas Moulin. *Motor touring in old California.* Millbrae: Celestial Arts, 1979. 143 pp. Publisher, 231 Adrian Road, Millbrae, 94030. \$6.95.

Dengler, Sandy. *Yosemite's marvelous creatures.* Yosemite: Flying Spur Press, 1979. Publisher, Box 278, Yosemite, 95389. 64 pp. \$3.75.

Faragher, John Mack. *Women and men on the Overland Trail.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979. 281 pp. \$17.50.

Friis, Leo J. *Historic buildings of pioneer Anaheim.* Santa Ana: Friis-Pioneer Press, 1979. 120 pp. Friends of the Anaheim Public Library, 500 West Broadway, Anaheim, 93085. \$8.50.

Gernes, Phyllis L. *Hidden in the chaparral.* Garden Valley: by author, 1979. 209 pp. Author, Route 3, Box 38B, Garden Valley, 95633. Cloth \$9.95; paper \$5.95.

Hamm, Edward, Jr. *When Fresno road the*



- rails. Glendale: Interurbans, 1979. 80 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 644, Glendale, 91205. \$9.50.
- Hodgkins, John B. *Thomas A. Edison and Major Frank McLaughlin: Their quest for gold in Butte County*. Chico: Association for Northern California Records and Research, 1979. Publisher, P.O. Box 3024, Chico, 95927. \$6.00.
- Holmes, Kenneth L. *Francis Drake's course in the North Pacific, 1579*. Monmouth, Oregon: by author, 1979. Author, 410 Orchard St., Monmouth, Oregon, 97361. \$3.00.
- Howard, Arthur D. *Geologic history of Middle California*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979. 119 pp. \$3.95.
- Howard, Donald M. *Archaeological resources of coastal Monterey County*. Carmel: Monterey County Archaeological Society, 1979. 100 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 4606, Carmel, 93921. \$24.95.
- Imperial Fresno. *Fresno, California 1897* (reprint). Fresno: Fresno City and County Historical Society, 1979. 152 pp. Publisher, c/o Rosellen Kershaw, 2995 E. Buckingham Way, Fresno 93726. \$17.20.
- Isett, Ronald E. *A history of the Christian Brothers of the San Francisco district, 1868-1944*. Moraga: Saint Mary's College Publications, 1979. Publisher, Box 412, Saint Mary's College, Moraga, 94575. \$12.95.
- Keeler, Charles. *The simple home*. Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1979. 110 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 667, Layton, Utah, 84041. \$9.95.
- Keilty, Edmund. *Interurbans without wires: The rail motorcar in the U.S.* Glendale: Interurbans, 1979. 200 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 6444, Glendale, 91205. \$23.95.
- Keller, John E. (ed.) *Anna Morrison Reed, 1849-1921*. Lafayette: by author, 1979. 312 pp. Author, 3191 Alcalanes Avenue, Lafayette, 94540. \$10.95.
- Kelsey, Harry. *The doctrina and confesionario of Juan Cortes*. Altadena: Howling Coyote Press, 1979. 130 pp. Publisher, 2104 North Craig Ave., Altadena, 91001. \$37.50 (limited edition of 125 copies).
- Killion, Tom. *Fortress Marin*. San Rafael: Presidio Press, 1979. 48 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 3515, San Rafael, 94902. \$7.95.
- Knox, Maxine, and Mary Rodriquez. *Making the most of the Monterey Peninsula and Big Sur*. San Rafael: Presidio Press, 1979. 165 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 3515, San Rafael, 94902. \$5.95.
- Leonard, James H. *San Francisco water and power*. San Francisco: Hetch Hetchy Water and Power, 1979. 48 pp. Publisher, 855 Harrison St., San Francisco, 94107.
- Longstreth, Richard W. (ed.) *A matter of taste. Willis Polk's writings on architecture in the Wave*. San Francisco: Book Club of California. \$35.00 (purchase limited to members).
- Maino, Jeannette, and Dena Boer. *Scenes of the Stanislaus, postcard memories*. Fresno: Pioneer Press, 1979. 140 pp. McHenry Museum, 1402 Eye St., Modesty, 95354. \$9.95.
- Mandel, Mike. *San Francisco giants, an oral history*. Santa Cruz: by author, 1979. 256 pp. Author, 111-112 Riverview Street, Santa Cruz, 95062. \$9.95.
- Murphy, Marion Fisher. *Seven stars for California. A story of the capitals*. Sonoma: by author, 1979. Author, 762 Juniper Court, Sonoma, 95476. \$3.75.
- Nowinski, Ira. *No vacancy: urban renewal and the elderly*. San Francisco: Carolyn Bean Associates, 1979. 48 pp. Publisher, 120 Second St., San Francisco, 94105. Cloth \$22.95; paper \$10.95.
- O'Neal, Bill. *Encyclopedia of western gun-fighters*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979. 386 pp. \$24.95.
- Robertson, Deane, and Peggy. *Camels in the West*. Sacramento: Arcade House, 1979. Publisher, P.O. Box 214744, Sacramento, 95821. \$2.95.
- Robinson, W. W. *Land in California* (reprint). Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979. 291 pp. Publisher, 2223 Fulton St., Berkeley, 94720. \$4.95.
- Rowell, Galen A. (ed.) *The vertical world of Yosemite: a collection of writings and photographs on rock climbing in Yosemite*. Berkeley: Wilderness Press, 1979. 207 pp. Publishers, 2440 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, 94704. Cloth \$16.95; paper \$9.95.
- Sachs, Benjamin. *Carson Mansion and Ingomar Theater*. Fresno: Valley Publishers, 1979. 165 pp. Publisher, 8 East Olive Avenue, Fresno, 93728. \$15.00.
- Sargent, Shirley. *Yosemite's historic Wawona*. Yosemite: Flying Spur Press, 1979. 80 pp. Publisher, Box 278, Yosemite, 95389. \$5.95.
- Schoenman, Theodore (ed.). *Father of California wine: Agoston Haraszthy*. Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1979. 126 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 2068, Santa Barbara, 93120. \$10.00.
- Standard Oil Company of California. *One hundred years helping to create the future, 1879-1979*. San Francisco: by author, 1979. 174 pp. Author, 225 Bush St., San Francisco, 94104.
- Thompson, Erwin N. *The rock: a history of Alcatraz Island, 1847-1972*. Denver: National Park Service, 1979. 657 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 2587, Denver, Colorado, 80255.
- . *Seacoast fortifications, San Francisco harbor*. Denver: National Park Service, 1979. 615 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 2587, Denver, Colorado, 80255.
- Verardo, Jennie and Denzil R. *Dr. Edward Turner Bale and his grist mill*. Napa: Napa County Historical Society, 1979. 12 pp. Publisher, 1219 1st St., Napa. \$5.00.
- Wheeler, Katharine Dean (ed.). *A journey to California: the letters of Thaddeus Dean, 1852*. Tampa: American Studies Press, 1979. 26 pp. Publisher, 13511 Palmwood Lane, Tampa, Florida, 33624. \$3.00.

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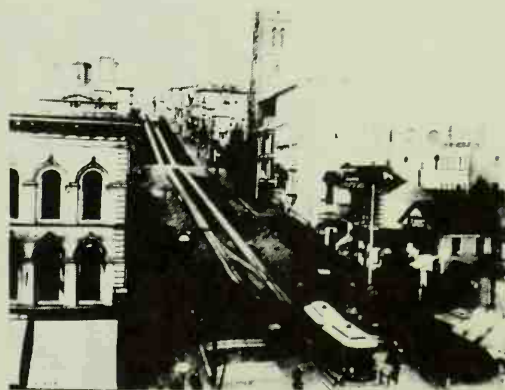
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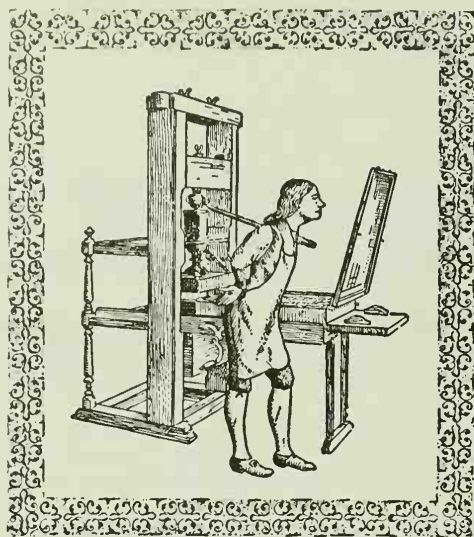
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